



**Columbia University**  
**in the City of New York**

LIBRARY

















MAJOR GENERAL PHILIP H. SHERIDAN.

THE REBELS DISPUTING SHERIDAN'S MARCH UP THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.







SHERIDAN'S RIDE TO THE FRONT AT WINCHESTER.











SHERIDAN'S TERRIBLE CHARGE UPON A REBEL SQUARE AT THE FIVE FORKS.

ILLUSTRATED LIFE, CAMPAIGNS

AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF

PHILIP H. SHERIDAN.

(MAJOR-GENERAL SHERIDAN.)

THE

Hero of the "Shenandoah Valley," "Battle of Five Forks," etc.

BY C. W. DENISON.

LATE CHAPLAIN IN THE U. S. ARMY.

---

With a full history of his Life. Battles and Campaigns. With a Portrait of General Sheridan, and other illustrative engravings of the "Battles in the Shenandoah Valley," "Battle of Five Forks," "Sheridan's Ride to the Front," at Winchester, etc.

---

PHILADELPHIA:

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS,  
306 CHESTNUT STREET.

---

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in and for the  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

# PREFACE.

---

THE accompanying pages have been compiled from authentic materials.

It is the object of the writer to do justice to the distinguished American general, whose signal services in the field have awakened such enthusiasm among our countrymen. To accomplish this, the strictest care has been observed with reference to authorities. No statement is made in this volume that is not in every respect attested by the facts.

C. W. D.

PHILADELPHIA, *December 8th*, 1865.



# CONTENTS.

---

## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
General Sheridan's Early History.....	25

## CHAPTER II.

Enters Active Service.....	29
----------------------------	----

## CHAPTER III.

First Battles.....	32
--------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV.

Western Battles.....	39
----------------------	----

## CHAPTER V.

Chattanooga.....	43
------------------	----

## CHAPTER VI.

Personal Sketch of General Sheridan, by one of his Staff..	46
--	----

## CHAPTER VII.

Sheridan in Tennessee.....	51
----------------------------	----

## CHAPTER VIII.

General Sheridan in Virginia.....	56
-----------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

At Fort Powhatan and Petersburg.....	69
--------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER X.

Last Campaign in the Shenandoah—The Advance—Affair at Newtown—The Advance continued—Battle of Crooked Run—Affairs at Summit Point—Fisher's Hill—Port Republic—Official Despatches from General Sheridan and others—Congratulation to the Cavalry—Battle of Cedar Creek—Arrival of General Sheridan—The tide turned—Sheridan's Ride, by Thomas Buchanan Read—Characteristic Despatch from General Sheridan—Comments on General Sheridan—Congratulatory Order—The Devastation of the Valley—Sheridan as a Gun-Taker.....	71-121
--	--------

## CHAPTER XI.

The Great Virginia Raid—March to Lynchburg—Official Despatches from General Sheridan—Official Despatches from the Secretary of War—Raid toward Richmond—Report from General Sheridan.....	122-141
---	---------

## CHAPTER XII.

Sheridan's part in the fall of the Rebel Capital—The Battle of Five Forks—Fall of Richmond and Petersburg—Official Report of General Sheridan—Sheridan's Instructions to General Warren—Rebel Flags Captured—Summary of Cavalry Captures in the Shenandoah Valley.....	142-173
--	---------

## CHAPTER XIII.

Testimony to the Value of American Cavalry.....	174
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIV.

Conclusion—Cavalry Sheridan, by George H. Boker, Esq.....	192-197
---	---------



# THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF GENERAL PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### HIS EARLY HISTORY.

PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN was born in Massachusetts, in the year 1831. His parents, as might be inferred from the name, are of Irish descent. While Philip was yet a child, they removed from Massachusetts to Perry county, Ohio. Their circumstances compelled them to limit his opportunities for acquiring an education. The lad might be seen, at this time, driving a water-cart, and earning his own living, in the town of Zanesville. It was here he first attracted the attention of the then member of Congress for that district. By the aid of an elder brother, who was possessed of some political influence in that quarter, he was so commended to the confidence of the Congressman, that, in the year 1848, he was admitted as a United States cadet at West Point military academy.

In June, 1853, he graduated, and immediately received his appointment as brevet second lieutenant in the First United States infantry. In the fall of the same year he joined his company at Fort Duncan, on the Texas frontier.

He was now twenty-two years of age. At the time

of which we write, the Indians were engaged in active hostilities against the United States. So efficiently did Sheridan perform his duties at this post, that he was soon promoted to full second-lieutenant in the Fourth United States infantry, and transferred to the frontiers of Oregon. During the months of May and June, while on his way to Oregon, he was placed in command of a detachment of United States troops, stationed at Fort Wood, in the harbor of New York. In the ensuing July he set sail for San Francisco, California, in charge of a considerable number of recruits for the Pacific division of the army.

On arriving in Oregon, he was given the command of an escort for the exploring expedition of Lieutenant Wilkinson, at that time engaged in making a survey of the proposed route for a branch of the Pacific railroad between San Francisco and Columbia river, on the Oregon coast. In this expedition there was an efficient corps of scientific gentlemen, employed for the purpose by the United States Government. By being introduced to their society, and mingling with them in their explorations from day to day, Sheridan was favored with opportunities for acquiring much valuable information. That the expedition was a useful one, is attested by the reports published by order of Congress, and that Lieutenant Sheridan performed his duties well, is proved by the official communications of Lieutenant Wilkinson. He was publicly commended for his conduct on this occasion in all the reports submitted to Congress.

In the fall of the year 1855, Sheridan was ordered to join a detachment of dragoons, under Major Raines, stationed at Vancouver, Washington Territory. From this point an expedition moved against the Yokima Indians. At the Cascades of the Columbia, on the 28th of April, 1856, the young lieutenant discharged his duty

so well during an engagement with these Indians, that his conduct was especially commended in general orders.

In the month of May following he was made commander of the department embracing the Yokima Reservation, including that section of the mountain coast range, and received the commendation of the government for soldierly conduct.

It will be borne in mind that a peculiar fitness is required for the command of these military posts among the hostile Indian tribes. To do well in such a command is a good indication for any young officer. Such was the success of Sheridan. He who can succeed in controlling fighting savages among the fastnesses of the Dalles of the Columbia, may reasonably be expected to triumph anywhere, and among the most dangerous foes of our country.

During his command in this wild and unfrequented region, Sheridan evinced his military talents by his whole course, and, especially, by his selection of a military post for the United States in the valley of the Seletz. For this selection, as well as for his general course in the Yokima country, he was publicly commended by the brave old chieftain, Lieutenant-General Scott. His conduct in the settlement of serious difficulties with the Yokima Bay tribes was in the highest degree meritorious, and was so mentioned in the official documents.

One distinct feature of military character which early distinguished Sheridan, and which continues to mark his course as an officer of the army, is his strict obedience to orders. He at once saw the necessity of this course, stationed at a distance from his chief department, surrounded by wily foes, and held personally responsible for the men and effects committed to his care. It is this that has given such efficiency to his subsequent movements, and that has led him to hold his own subordinates, how-

ever prominent and efficient, to the same strict account to which he has always himself submitted.

Receiving the approbation of his superiors for his general conduct on the Indian frontier, and especially for his skill and good judgment in the establishment of another military post at Yambill, he was promoted to the captaincy of the thirteenth United States infantry, in March, 1861, and was stationed at Jefferson barracks, Missouri, in the fall of that year.

At this post he became a member of a special military commission, appointed to audit certain claims growing out of the occupation of Missouri by a portion of the United States army. Of this commission, as Captain Sheridan, he was made president, and acted with skill and efficiency in that capacity, receiving the commendation of the national War Department.

At the close of the year 1861 he was appointed chief quartermaster and commissary of the army of the Southwest. This was rapid promotion for the young soldier, but it was not more rapid than he had fairly earned.

Sheridan was well fitted for quartermaster and commissary. While all admitted him to be neat in person, courteous in demeanor, affable in conversation, exact in business relations, strict in orders, regulations and established military customs, he proved himself to possess the requisite vital energy and force essential to success.

Very few men in the army can make a first class quartermaster and commissary. They may be said to be almost as scarce as that select portion of society who are supposed to "know how to keep a hotel." Something of this feature in the character of Sheridan may be judged by the fact that he soon became, and ever after remained when in that department, a master

quartermaster, and a necessary commissary. He had no superior in his difficult and responsible position.

In May, 1864, he was stationed at Corinth, Mississippi, as chief quartermaster and commissary on the staff of General Halleck, having shown, by his experience in his calling, by his devotion to details, by his skill and tact, how well he was fitted for the post.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### ENTERS ACTIVE SERVICE.

ON the 27th of May, 1862, Captain Sheridan was appointed colonel of the body of United States troops known as the second Michigan cavalry. It was here that he began his distinguished career as a cavalry officer. He took this position for active service at a time when the army of the Southwest had already distinguished itself by the brilliant victories of Keetsville, Pea Ridge, Sugar Creek, Cross Hollows, and on many another well-fought field through the country of northern and central Arkansas.

But it was everywhere admitted in the army that the cavalry arm needed to be strengthened. In all the battles we had thus far fought, the southern cavalry had done comparatively well. It was more numerous, more experienced, and better drilled than our own. The men of the south were not more brave than ours. That we had abundantly proved in every engagement. But the southern horse, as a body, were far more accustomed to the saddle, and to all the evolutions of cavalry. It might be said of the Southron, especially him of Virginia, Kentucky, Ten-



nessee, Texas, and other parts of the southwest, that he was born on horseback, booted, spurred and armed for battle. He was familiar with every mountain pass and gorge, every defile and summit, every by-path and wooded copse, where infantry and artillery would be at fault, and where cavalry would fight to advantage. The southern cavalryman had been accustomed to the sudden and fiery charge, the leap from the hidden hill-side, the dash through the dark and narrow valley, the secret deploy among tangled ferns and thick-set chapparals, until he came to look on the feat of surprising our undisciplined infantry as a matter of course, and of surrounding our artillery as a necessary consequence of superior advantage in position, numbers and speed.

As the war progressed, in its earlier stages, it became the constant boast of the southern leaders that the troops of the United States could not and would not withstand their cavalry. Stuart, Fitz Hugh Lee, Hampton, and other names of some of these leaders, soon became the synonyms of all that was alert, dashing, courageous and successful.

The great majority of the Union commanders, on the other hand, gradually came to admit the practical effect of these facts, until it was almost generally understood that they were not satisfied with their cavalry. There were local and individual exceptions, of course—exceptions that were all the more honorable to the Union service because they were necessarily so rare—but the great conviction of the army and the country was fixed and strong that our cavalry needed to be much improved ere it could accomplish all that was needed to secure the final victory.

It is at this critical moment that Sheridan appears on the field of active duty. As we enter with him on his

brilliant career, we may glance at the peculiarities of character which distinguish him as a great commander.

His genial and attractive qualities endeared him, at the outset, to his fellow officers and soldiers. All his subordinates unite to bear witness to his superior social qualities, while his men have ever looked on him with deep affection. He had the happy faculty of mingling what was due to official respect with kindly courtesy, so that strict discipline and personal geniality secured prompt and cheerful obedience to orders. It was his custom to give his personal attention to the minute details of his position, and, while doing so, to impart valuable information to those who sought it at his hands. His just pride in all that relates to military discipline was never allowed to interfere with the courtesies due from the well-bred gentleman. Hence his wide-spread and long-continued popularity in the Union army.

At the time of which we now write the movements of the troops under General Curtis required great skill and energy in the quartermaster's department. These were found to be abundantly supplied in Sheridan. In the establishment of army depots, the organization of transportation trains, the supply of food and *materiel* for the army in motion, he was equal to any emergency. With General Halleck, at Corinth, the same valuable qualities of character were developed in Sheridan, conferring benefits on the then comparatively inexperienced army of the Southwest, that were not only felt through that department, but, to a certain extent, through all the armies of the Republic.

## CHAPTER III.

## FIRST BATTLES.

IN the month of July, 1861, Sheridan won his brigadier's star. It was in the hard-fought action of Booneville. In less than six weeks from the time he was made a colonel of cavalry, he was placed in command of the second brigade of the cavalry division of the army of the Mississippi. While stationed at Booneville he was suddenly attacked by the rebel General Chalmers, at the head of over five thousand picked southern cavalymen.

The rebels confidently advanced, with all the *eclat* of position upon them, and with all the *elan* of assured success. Sheridan's force consisted only of his own regiment and the second Iowa cavalry. With this small but determined body of men he skirmished with the rebels, until they were checked, and taught, for almost the first time in their cavalry history, that it was one thing to advance with a dash and quite another to win the final victory. They were held for some time in check by Sheridan, on the edge of a deep swamp, where he occupied an advantageous position. From this point, by a movement of strategy that at once developed his character, he deployed a detachment of his men to the rear of the rebels, and took them completely by surprise. They supposed, from the manner of the charge of Sheridan's men, that they must be backed up by a large reserve force, and fell back in confusion. At the same moment Sheridan attacked their front in person in his most impetuous style, rolling them up in the utmost disorder along the whole line. Stricken with dismay the enemy fled from the field, running as fast as their horses would carry them a distance of twenty



miles, and leaving arms, equipments, clothing and other trophies of war scattered along the route.

This was one of the first actions of the war in which the boasted charm of the southern cavalry was broken. It was a most fitting occasion for which to confer on Sheridan the well-earned title of brigadier-general. He at once began to attract public attention. His personal appearance began to fill the eyes of his countrymen. His stature is small—not more than five feet six inches. His chest is broad and compact; his muscles are firm and active; his face is open and singularly expressive; his brow is comparatively broad and high; his eyes are dark, clear, quick in motion; his head long and well-balanced, and covered with a full crop of curling black hair.

Such is Cavalry Sheridan.

At the time of his entrance on his celebrated career as a cavalry commander, he was well aware of the difficulties that surrounded the cavalry arm of the service. How well he has done his part in removing those difficulties, and to what distinctions he has helped to raise the patriot horsemen of our country, the pages of this volume abundantly prove.

While on service at Booneville, Sheridan turned his quartermaster facilities to good account, by capturing a considerable number of the horses and cattle of the rebels. In this vicinity, at a place called Ricuzi, he was attacked by the enemy's cavalry, under Colonel Faulkner, and defeated them, making several valuable captures, and driving the remnant in great disorder as far as the town of Ripley.

On the 7th of September he was ordered to proceed with the second Michigan cavalry, and report to the army in Kentucky. He reached Louisville in a short time, and was soon put in command of the third division of the army of the Ohio, composed, at that time, of ten regiments

of infantry, one of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery. The country through which they marched bears to this day the evidence of the valor with which these troops of Sheridan defended it. The enemy was close at hand, under skilful and determined generals. Surprises were constantly expected, on every side. The numerous rifle-pits and embankments thrown up in this quarter, abundantly attest to the vigilance with which Sheridan guarded his new trust, and the courage with which he defended the rights of the people of the great west.

In this campaign Sheridan accompanied Buell in the march against Bragg. He was then transferred to the command of the eleventh division of the army of the Ohio, which embraced a larger body of cavalry than the second. At Perryville he was assigned a still more important position. Hardee, Leydell, and other rebel generals, were actively engaged in the vicinity, having attacked our troops on the heights of Doctor's creek and been repulsed by Sheridan. On the afternoon of the 8th of October, another attack was made on his position by a strong force under Hardee. The conflict was stern and long-continued; but the valor and dash of Sheridan triumphed, although assailed by a combined and furious body of artillery, cavalry and infantry. The infantry resorted to the bayonet, and charged up the hill with that short curt yell peculiar at one time to the rebels. They evidently counted on a certain and splendid success. But they were mistaken. Sheridan drove them back, at all points, and scattered them from their batteries with such havoc that they left large numbers of dead and wounded on the field. Our own losses were severe; proving to all engaged, and to the country at large, that the war was assuming a definite shape that could not be misunderstood, and demanding sacrifices worthy of the name and destiny of the Republic.

The battle of Perryville added new lustre to the fame of Sheridan. He was retained in active positions, and marched with the army through Kentucky, to Nashville, Tennessee. At this point, in November, 1861, he was placed in command of a division of the army of the Cumberland.

On the advance to Murfreesborough, Tennessee, December 26th, General Sheridan commanded the division of the brave and lamented Major-General McCook. It was near this point the celebrated battle of Stone river occurred, in which Sheridan bore so distinguished a part. The details of this significant conflict have passed into history. On the report of it by the Secretary of War, General Sheridan was nominated by President Lincoln as Major-General, and confirmed by the Senate.

When we contemplate the eminence which General Sheridan has so soon reached, we are reminded of some of the striking incidents of his early history. The personal inspiration which seems to spring from his presence on the field of battle, may be naturally traced back to the belligerency of his youth. A graphic sketch of him in *Harpers' Monthly* for August, 1865, describes him as born a belligerent. He is of the same stock of ancestry from whom have descended the Andrew Jacksons and Andrew Johnsons of our own times. At West Point, he is accurately described as "the best-natured and most belligerent" cadet in the academy. It is stated on good authority that one of his instructors, in order to secure his graduation, employed the argument that a belligerent temperament was not a fault in a soldier! And this is said to have secured the young fighter the needed approval of the West Point board of instructors. Gentlemen who were themselves educated as soldiers, could not refuse graduating honors to a worthy youth on the ground of his belligerency.

The first captaincy of Sheridan was in the regiment then commanded by General Sherman. This regiment was stationed in 1861 at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, to which point Sheridan was ordered. He was thus introduced to the army of the trans-Mississippi, or of the Southwest, and first saw active service in the Union war under its colors. This army had gone through a campaign under the brilliant and lamented General Lyon; had made preparations for another under General Fremont; and at the time of the arrival of Sheridan, was commanded by General Halleck. The organizing talents of the young captain were at once called into requisition. He was of great service to General Curtis, who was then in active command of the troops in the field.

In the year 1862, the noble qualities of Sheridan were brought out by his opposition to the then frequent practice of "Jay-hawking," or privately plundering the enemy. He deliberately exposed himself to arrest and censure, and submitted to be removed from his command in that quarter and transferred to another, rather than sanction a custom which every high-minded regular must condemn. General Halleck sympathized with Sheridan in these honorable sentiments, and on his entrance to his department at once made him the chief quartermaster, and placed him in an active position on his staff.

The arrest of Sheridan for refusing to be a "Jay-hawker," is deemed to be one of the prominent turning-points in his signal career. His manly course in that respect not only transferred him to a new and more congenial field, but it created an impression respecting his fighting qualities among the men, that his subsequent history has abundantly illustrated.

His transfer from the regular to the volunteer service, from the infantry to the cavalry arm, was sudden; but it was the first step in a new path that has proved to be the

• successful one of his military journey. His ambition was at once inspired by his being so rapidly promoted. He had looked forward to being a major of infantry, after years of hard service; and now, at the very advent of his mission, he is honored with the eagles as a colonel of cavalry. We shall see, as we progress with his wonderfully active life, how well he responded to this call of the inspiration of patriotic ambition. All the best powers of his belligerent, dashing, adventurous nature were at once called forth, and found full play in the achievements of the Union horse.

The attack on Beauregard at Corinth, led by Sheridan, in the spring of 1862, was the first movement on the enemy in the nature of a raid. It was completely successful. It at once gave a new impulse to the growing cavalry arm. The *eclat* that had clustered around the southern cavalry began almost immediately to appear to a disadvantage, in comparison with the superior dash and courage evinced by Sheridan and his compeers. Morgan, Stuart, and other rebel cavalry commanders of their character, had attracted public attention by their wild forays; but they had all proved to be attacks on defenceless points, and among a people where they were almost sure not to be resisted. It was an easy thing for these chivalric braves to attack peaceful villages, and the quiet midnight retreats of plantations. Victory was of course always sure in such cases; but it was equally sure to be bloodless and inglorious.

The assaults of Sheridan on the lines of the enemy were of an entirely different character. He went out from camp expecting to meet an armed foe; to encounter ambuscades from wily horsemen, mounted and ready for battle,—not to make hurried descents on unresisting farmers, and valorous dashes for plunder through the bovine barricades of sleeping cattle, or the lattice-work



files of fowls, roosted *en barbette*. By his bold and courageous course, at the outset of his career, Sheridan did much toward establishing the high character so bravely won and so well sustained by the Union cavalry.

But the peculiar position of our horse, at the opening of the great war for the Union, was not confined to the west. It was admitted to be nearly the same everywhere. In a well-written volume by Surgeon James Moore, U. S. A., entitled "Kilpatrick and Our Cavalry," there is a valuable collection of historical facts on this subject. As early in the war as August, 1862, special efforts were made by Kilpatrick, Bayard, Gregg, Pleasanton, Custer, Farnsworth, and other cavalry officers, aided by General Hooker, who believed in cavalry, to re-organize, concentrate, and make more efficient this now powerful arm of the service. Under the impulse of these well-timed movements, the cavalry corps of the army of the Potomac was formed, and General Stoneman appointed its commander. The subsequent movements of this force, under Kilpatrick, Pleasanton, Gregg, Bayard, and others, have attracted well-deserved attention, and covered the eastern cavalry with honor. The victory of Kilpatrick over Stuart, at Hanover, Pennsylvania, again on the mountains of Monterey, and the noble cavalry achievements on the bloody and glorious field of Gettysburg, will ever be kept in grateful remembrance by our patriotic countrymen. Nor will they ever forget the work done by the cavalry under General Sherman, nor the names of the brave commanders who led them through those fields of glory—from Vicksburg to Chattanooga, from Chattanooga to Atlanta, from Atlanta to Savannah, from Savannah to Charleston from Charleston to Richmond.

## CHAPTER IV.

## WESTERN BATTLES.

THE determined character of Sheridan was early manifested at the head of his troops. Accustomed to obey superior orders himself, he was determined to enforce similar obedience on those he commanded.

While in camp at Bridgeport, Alabama, in 1863, General George H. Thomas accompanied him in an official examination of his works at that place. "At one of the way stations," says the writer of the spirited sketch of Sheridan in *Harper's Monthly*, "the train halted for an unusually long time, and Sheridan, on asking the conductor, a great burly six-footer, the reason, met with a somewhat gruff reply. Sheridan contented himself with reproving his manner, and ordered him to proceed with the train. The conductor did not reply, and failed to obey. After waiting some time longer, Sheridan sent for the conductor, and demanded to know why he had not obeyed. The conductor answered in a gruff manner, that he received his orders from the military superintendent only. Without giving him time to finish the insulting reply Sheridan struck him several rapid blows, kicked him from the cars into the hands of a guard, and then ordered the train forward, acting as conductor on the down and return trip. After starting his train he returned to his seat by the side of General Thomas, and, without referring to the subject, resumed his conversation with that dignified officer."

These are some of the characteristics of the man whose career we are truthfully depicting in these pages. Small in stature—so small that his men have been accustomed

to call him "Little Phil."—he possesses much physical energy, and all the other qualities of a first-class fighting general. Mounted, sword in hand, in the charge and smoke of battle, his stature is forgotten; and you can see only the dashing cavalryman, who, every inch a soldier, and all his inches gathered up and fixed together with their utmost power, is determined to know nothing but his country and victory.

The devotion of General Sheridan to his cavalry is extraordinary. He has on several occasions been placed in command of portions of the army composed exclusively of infantry, and he has always handled them well. But he has frequently asserted that, while he does not disparage in the least any other arm, cavalry is his *forte*.

At the battle of Dandridge, Tennessee, in January 1864, a characteristic incident occurred, that illustrates this peculiarity. Colonel (now General) Jordan was in command of a division of cavalry. The enemy was advancing from a thick undergrowth, with a large body of infantry and artillery. The shells were flying thick and fast, and the battle had begun to rage with considerable vigor. Jordan, after having driven the enemy, had drawn up a body of his troopers around him, on a commanding hill, prepared for another charge at the appropriate moment.

He did not have to wait long. Just as he was preparing for a dash forward, and his bugles were about swelling their brazen throats with "Charge!" Sheridan rode rapidly up the brow of the hill.

"How is this, Colonel Jordan?" he inquired. "Where are the enemy?"

"Close at hand, General Sheridan," promptly replied Jordan.

"But I do not hear any bullets!" continued Sheridan, checking his horse, who appeared to be, like his master, impatient of delay.



He had hardly ceased speaking when the long lines of the enemy swept across the intervening space, and the loud-mouthed trumpets sounded the charge. In an instant the whole body of troopers dashed impetuously forward, Sheridan himself in the very front. The rebels met with such a shock as they advanced that they reeled and staggered back in broken squadrons all over the field. They were completely demoralized. A captured rebel officer afterwards expressed it, when asked

“What else could you expect?”

“We didn’t expect to be rode over in *that* way!”

As the charge sounded over the roar of battle, and the troopers dashed on after the enemy, the enthusiasm knew no bounds. Sweeping, like a man on a winged steed, to the front, Sheridan shouted: “Come on! boys, come on! now’s the day, and now’s the hour!”

The voice was a strange one to Jordan’s men; but they felt there was the right ring in it; they saw Jordan himself by the side of Sheridan, dashing with him into the thickest of the fight; and not a man of them stopped in his onward and upward career, until the gorge and adjacent hill-side were completely cleared of the enemy.

As they paused a moment, being aware of the proximity of a still larger rebel force, Sheridan reined in his fiery steed, who, with curved neck, and foaming mouth, champing teeth, and pawing feet, had become, like his rider, the impersonation of battle, and turning toward Jordan, he exclaimed:

“Bless my soul! I thought I belonged again to the cavalry! I have forgotten all about my infantry! Excuse me, Colonel Jordan. I must hurry back to my command.”

So saying, with a good-natured smile and a military bow, he withdrew. But the remembrance of his sudden appearance in that charge, his quick response, uncalled, to the bugle, and his shout “Come on, boys! come on!”

will never be forgotten by any one who saw and heard Sheridan that memorable day.

It is such incidents of battle as these that show the steady progress made by the cavalry of the United States. Many similar incidents are depicted in the career of our general, who has well been called "Cavalry Sheridan."

As we look back for only three years, we can scarcely realize the results attained by our cavalry. In the month of December, 1861, the cavalry arm was considered by the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, as "too expensive" to be continued at its then rate of numbers. We had at that time an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, of whom less than fifteen thousand were cavalry. It was the written and recorded opinion of our prominent generals of that period, that even that small number was too large. It was generally considered that the regular cavalry—embracing, as a whole, less than five thousand—would be amply sufficient for all army purposes. They would be fully competent to act as advanced and rear guards, to deploy in casual raids for necessary provisions, to serve as couriers for the infantry and artillery. To fight with an army composed to any great extent of cavalry was never dreamed of for a moment.

What a change has been wrought in our estimation of cavalry within the short compass of three years ! The report of the Secretary of War for the year 1862, states the number of our forces then in the field to be six hundred and seventy thousand. The several arms of the service were distributed as follows :

	Volunteers.	Regulars.	Aggregate.
Infantry.....	557,208	11,175	568,383
Cavalry .....	54,654	4,744	59,398
Artillery.....	20,380	4,308	24,688
Rifles and Sharp-shooters.....	8,325	—	8,325
Engineers .....	—	107	107
Total.....	640,637	20,334	660,971

From this time forward, to the close of the war, there was a steady increase of the fighting cavalry force. Where all have done so well comparisons are out of place ; but it is not too much for history to record that some of the most powerful of the blows that terminated the rebellion were administered by the Union cavalry.

It is on these accounts that the name of Sheridan has acquired such brilliancy. We are not to consider him as a dashing young cavalry officer, plunging out of camp here and there in some desperate and daring raid upon the powerful and wily enemy, but as a distinguished, practised, skilful commander of cavalry among other cavalry officers of our country who have won high distinctions by their chivalric deeds.

From a little band of a few thousands of comparatively untried horse, our cavalry had become, at the close of our great national struggle, the most numerous and most powerful body of the kind among all the armies of the earth. The facts reported in these pages, show how much of this great result may be truly attributed to the patriotism, tact and valor of PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### CHATTANOOGA.

IN the opening cavalry career of General Sheridan at the west, the great feature of his movements was energy. His clearly-defined purpose was to show how it was to be done, in strongly-marked contrast with the commanders who were evidently bent on showing how not to do it. His opinion, as written by the point of his sabre on his

newly-won stars was that of Ward, the naval hero, who fell so early at the bloody attack on Mathias Point :

“ This is not a mere political canvass. It is a real war—and somebody must be hurt.”

Ward was cut down, in almost the first battle that he fought, covered with honor in defending his country's flag—a brave officer, a devoted child of the navy, and one of our most scientific naval commanders. But Sheridan, equally brave, dashing and talented, has lived on to achieve military greatness, as he has nobly aided to rid his country of her deadliest foes. Among the mountain-passes and plains of the west his determined onsets on the enemies of the Republic showed him, at the very outset of his career, to be terribly in earnest.

A writer accompanying Rosecrans through the dark and stormy battle-gorges of Stone river, asserts that the dashing gallantry of Sheridan turned the tide of war on that occasion. When he drew out his decimated troops from the thickest cedars of the mountains near Chickamauga, and brought them into line before his commanding general, his only remark was—

“ Here we are, general ! all that is left of us ! Our guns and our cartridge-boxes are all empty !”

The rapidity with which he pursued the enemy, after this desperate battle, and during the ensuing Tullahoma campaign, is described by one who was present as partaking of a wild energy that carried every thing before it. His men were swept irresistibly onward by the impetuosity of their leader. So rapid was the march, that when he reached the bridge at Bridgeport, on the Tennessee, just in time to prevent it from being destroyed by the rebel incendiaries, the enemy supposed him to be at the head of a body of our cavalry !

Some of the rear-guard of the retreating rebel army were sitting on the bridge as Sheridan dashed up :

"Put out that fire!" he shouted to his troops nearest the smoking and blazing wood-work. "We want the bridge! Put out the fire!"

"Who are you?" asked the rebels, in astonishment.

"United States infantry, under Sheridan!" replied the soldier nearest to the questioner.

"Hi!" continued the rebel, still more surprised, "Sheridan's men! We thought you belonged to Stanley's troopers!"

It was in the terrific assault of Chattanooga, in November, 1863, that the great soldierly qualities of Sheridan made one of their earliest displays. Here he first drew the attention of General Grant, on the field—a man who has proved himself to be one of the best judges of his associates of any commander history has ever produced. The assault and conquest of the point at Chattanooga called Missionary Ridge, must ever be regarded as one of the most brilliant achievements of the whole war. It stands out by itself as a mountain charge of terrible valor.

The men of Sheridan had been kept on the hill-sides, and at the base of old Lookout, during an interval of suspense, embracing thirty-six consecutive hours. Few men have ever had their patience and endurance tried as were theirs on that day. At length the expected signal came. The booming cannon sounded from the headquarters of Grant. How quickly the troopers under Sheridan sprang forward! They did not wait for the flash of the second gun, but dashed up the steep mountain sides, as if leaping forward in play.

The cross-fire of the enemy poured down like a tide of flame from the ramparts above; but still the men of Sheridan pressed up, up, up, toward the lofty summits of the ridge. He was at their head, waving his sword, and calling on every man to follow him. There was no resisting his burning appeals. Twenty rebel batteries were at that

moment belching their fiery torrents down upon them ; but up they strode, through the openings of frowning cliffs and the tangled roots and branches of the gorges, with charge after charge, carrying every thing before them.

Near the highest peak his horse was shot dead under him ; but he sprang from the petted animal, and, drawn sword in hand, continued the fight on foot. He was among the first of the victors who reached the conquered parapets ; and as he mounted them, and swung his sword in triumph, his own cheers mingled with those of his heroic men as they rang aloud in the upper air, and swept down the mountain to the plains below.

The warm praises of General Grant were freely given to Sheridan for this noble deed. It has been deemed the turning point in his upward career, as establishing his capacity as a leader of men beyond all question. As such it was evident Grant regarded him that day ; and events have proved that he has held him in equally high estimation ever since.

It was not long after the glorious feat of Chattanooga that Sheridan was placed in command of all the cavalry, under General Grant, in the noble army of the Potomac.



## CHAPTER VI.

PERSONAL SKETCH OF GENERAL SHERIDAN BY ONE OF HIS  
STAFF.

WE are indebted to Major Alfred R. Calhoun, formerly of the Kentucky cavalry, for the annexed sketch of General Sheridan :

“I first saw Sheridan at Corinth Mississippi, where



he was then acting chief quartermaster, on the staff of General Halleck. There was certainly nothing in the physique of the man to denote the spirit within which was designed to make him the greatest cavalry leader of his age. He was a mild-looking, unassuming man, with a quiet, satisfied air about him, that gave him the appearance of any thing but an aspiring man. But under that lamb-like exterior there was hidden the lion's spirit, and the dark gray eye which beamed so kindly when at ease, would often, to the astonishment of those he was brought in contact with, turn like a living coal, and his smooth tongue would grow harsh with vehement interjections, that showed Sheridan had reduced invectives to a fine art. No man would willingly wish to rouse the little quartermaster's anger.

“During the siege of Corinth, an incident occurred which served to illustrate this combative disposition, while at the same time it showed a thorough kindness of heart. A train laden with supplies was pushing up from Pittsburg Landing to the front; the road was very rough, and the warm sun and heavy loads so fatigued the animals that a lead mule of one train fell down exhausted. The heartless driver descended from his seat and beat the poor dying animal cruelly, using the most fearful oaths. Sheridan came up, and seeing the state of affairs, called out to the driver to desist. The latter looked up, and seeing the unassuming man who ordered him, in a fierce tone yelled back:

“‘Stand back! or I will wallop you worse than the mule.’

“That was enough. Quick as the bound of a tiger, Sheridan was off his horse, and with a ringing blow he felled the burly driver; then taking the whip used to beat the mule, he gave the crestfallen Jehu a castigation he will remember while he lives.



“My first experience in raiding was under Colonel Elliott, who commanded a brigade in which Sheridan had charge of the second Michigan cavalry. We started to go round Corinth and sever the railroad leading south from Corinth. We met a large body of rebel cavalry near Boonesville, among them Wharton’s Texas Rangers. Hitherto the rebels had laughed at our horsemen and cavalry leaders; but they felt a blow there which staggered them, and which, repeated at another point by the same hand, wound up the rebellion.

“During the fight, the second Michigan, which was fighting dismounted, was very much annoyed by a howitzer battery stationed near a piece of woods, and supported by the famous eighth Texas, on their fiery mustangs. It chafed the spirit of the little colonel, who was dashing backward and forward, his face beaming with the wild anger of battle, and a perfect deluge of oaths going out against the enemy.

“At length the order was given to fall back. The bugle sounded, ‘Boots and saddles!’ and the second Michigan were mounted. The line was formed, and all sat ready for the next move.

“‘Forward!’ came the order, and at a trot they moved on, Sheridan galloping along the line, as if to let out his anger and nervous energy.

“At last the bugle sounded, ‘Draw sabres!—Charge!’ Then Sheridan became the personification of every thing soldierly. Gazing on the long line of gleaming swords, his own leaped from its scabbard, and spurring his horse full fifty yards in advance of the line, sent up a yell which thrilled his men; and, in the face of a fearful fire, they swept over the battery and cut down the gunners, then into the midst of the eighth Texas.

“Not a shot was fired, but sabres rose and fell with crimson flashes; and where the fray was thickest, there

Sheridan struck, yelling out all the time, 'Down with the black fiends! Pour it into them, my boys! Push them down! God curse them! Crush them down!'

"And Sheridan's boys did; for the defeated prairie riders scattered in every direction.

"As they were fleeing Sheridan singled out a powerful rider, who had shown us a bold front, and started in pursuit. The Texan, seeing he could not escape, turned suddenly and fired at the advancing Yankee; then closed for a struggle. But it was momentary; by a dexterous movement Sheridan brought his horse to the left of his antagonist, his sword flashed for an instant and the next the rebel fell, covered with blood and brains—while Sheridan, leading a horse, galloped back, 'mid the hurrahs of the command.

"Sheridan, were it not for his unvarying good luck, would be called the most reckless of men. He exposes himself without apparent necessity; but the boys like it—and his presence under fire is always sure to create the greatest enthusiasm amongst the men.

"At Perryville, where Sheridan commanded a division of infantry, we were very warmly pressed by the enemy under Bragg, who outnumbered us two to one.

"It was very warm, and our men suffered for water. There was a small stream between the contending armies, which could be used by neither while the present positions were maintained. Slowly the rebels pushed our whole line back, gaining possession of the stream. The men were fainting by hundreds under the scorching sun, and the horses were panting beside the blistering guns.

"'I can't stand this!' cried Sheridan.

"An aid galloped off with a message, and soon returned, when Sheridan became himself again, for he was ordered to advance, which they did with a cheer which sent the enemy flying before a bayonet was used; but on getting

to the stream, it was found muddy and bloody. Jumping from his horse Sheridan scooped out a hole with his sword and took a long drink. Then looking around with a whimsical expression, he addressed an aid :

“ ‘ Captain C., I feel very mean ; I believe I have a little rebel blood in me ! ’

“ Sheridan’s influence on his men was never more thoroughly tried than at Stone River. Rosecrans used to call him his ‘ Little Napoleon,’ and in that terrific fight he proved himself so to be. The nature of the ground was such that every soldier seemed to fight on his own responsibility. Owing to the sudden attack on McCook, Sheridan’s division was subjected to a terrible cross fire from an overwhelming force of the enemy. It was forced into a small forest of stunted cedars, and nearly one half of the command had fallen, but the fate of the army of the Cumberland depended on Sheridan’s holding his ground, and well he did it. His horse was killed ; but on foot he ran from point to point till remounted, encouraging his men, swearing at stragglers, and calling down vengeance on ‘ the rebel hounds.’

“ ‘ Had Sheridan been omnipotent then,’ I heard an officer since say, ‘ there would be very few rebels left to take the oath of allegiance ! ’

“ By his gallantry on that field of carnage Sheridan won the respect of every officer, and he became the pet of every private, who never grew tired cheering ‘ Little Phil.’

“ Perhaps Sheridan’s reckless daring shone more conspicuously at Missionary Ridge than in any other battle of the war.”

## CHAPTER VII.

## SHERIDAN IN TENNESSEE.

THE Union victories in Tennessee were among the first events of the war to give an early prominence to General Sheridan. It was at this time, in the fall of 1863, that he first attracted the favorable notice of General Grant.

Our great victory in the battle, near Chattanooga, is thus officially described by one of the most efficient officers of the United States army :

“HEADQUARTERS, CHATTANOOGA, Nov. 26, 1863.

“HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War* :

“SIR :—On the 23d instant, at 11½ A.M., General Grant ordered a demonstration against Missionary Ridge, to develop the force holding it. The troops marched out, formed in order, and advanced in line of battle, as if on a parade. The rebels watched the formation and movement from their picket lines and rifle-pits, and from the summits of Missionary Ridge, five hundred feet above us, and thought it was a review and drill, so openly and deliberately, so regular, was it all done.

“The line advanced, preceded by skirmishers, and at two o'clock P.M. reached our picket lines and opened a rattling volley upon the rebel pickets, who replied and ran into their advanced line of rifle-pits. After them went our skirmishers and into them, along the centre of the line of twenty-five thousand troops which General Thomas had so quickly displayed, until we opened fire. Prisoners assert that they thought the whole movement was a review and general drill, and that it was too late to send to their camps for reinforcements, and that they were overwhelmed by force of numbers. It was a surprise in open daylight.

“At three, P.M., the important advanced position of Orchard Knob and the lines right and left were in our possession, and arrangements were ordered for holding them

during the night. The next day, at daylight, General Thomas had five thousand men across the Tennessee, and established on its south bank, and commenced the construction of a pontoon bridge about six miles above Chattanooga. The rebel steamer *Dunbar* was repaired at the right moment, and rendered effective aid in this crossing, carrying over six thousand men. By nightfall, General Thomas had seized the extremity of Missionary Ridge nearest the river, and was intrenching himself. General Howard, with a brigade, opened communication with him from Chattanooga, on the south side of the river. Skirmishing and cannonading continued all day on the left and centre. General Hooker scaled the slopes of Lookout Mountain, and from the valley of Lookout creek drove the rebels around the point. He captured some two thousand prisoners, and established himself high up on the mountain side, in full view of Chattanooga. This raised the blockade, and now steamers were ordered from Bridgeport to Chattanooga. They had run only to Kelly's Ferry, whence ten miles of hauling over mountain roads and twice across the Tennessee on pontoon bridges brought us our supplies.

"All night the point of Missionary Ridge on the extreme left and the side of Lookout Mountain, on the extreme right, blazed with the camp-fires of loyal troops. The day had been one of dense mists and rains, and much of General Hooker's battle was fought above the clouds, which concealed him from our view, but from which his musketry was heard. At nightfall the sky cleared and the full moon, 'the traitor's doom,' shone upon the beautiful scene, until 1 A.M., when twinkling sparks upon the mountain side showed that picket skirmishing was going on. Then it ceased. A brigade, sent from Chattanooga, crossed the Chattanooga creek and opened communication with Hooker. General Grant's headquarters during the afternoon of the 23d and the day of the 24th, were in Wood's redoubt; except when, in the course of the day, he rode along the advanced line, visiting the headquarters of the several commanders, in Chattanooga valley.

"At daylight on the 25th the stars and stripes were descried on the peak of Lookout. The rebels had evac-



uated the mountain. Hooker moved to descend the mountain, and striking Missionary Ridge at the Rossville Gap, to sweep on both sides and on its summit.

"The rebel troops were seen as soon as it was light enough, streaming regiments and brigades along the narrow summit of Missionary Ridge, either concentrating on the right to overwhelm Sherman, or marching for the railroad, and raising the siege. They had evacuated the valley of Chattanooga—would they abandon that of Chickamauga?

"The twenty-pounders and four and a quarter-inch rifles of Wood's redoubt opened on Missionary Ridge. Orchard Knob sent its compliments to the ridge, which, with rifled Parrotts answered, and the cannonade thus commenced continued all day. Shot and shell screamed from Orchard Knob to Missionary Ridge, and from Missionary Ridge to Orchard Knob, and from Wood's redoubt over the heads of Generals Grant and Thomas and their staffs, who were with us in this favorable position, from whence the whole battle could be seen as in an amphitheatre. The headquarters were under fire all day long.

"Cannonading and musketry were heard from General Sherman, and General Howard marched the eleventh corps to join him. General Thomas sent out skirmishers, who drove in the rebel pickets, and chased them into their intrenchments, and at the foot of Missionary Ridge, Sherman made an assault against Bragg's right, intrenched on a high knob next to that, on which Sherman himself lay fortified. The assault was gallantly made. Sherman reached the edge of the crest, and held his ground for (it seemed to me) an hour, but was bloodily repulsed by reserves.

"A general advance was ordered, and a strong line of skirmishers, followed by a deploy line of battle, some two miles in length. At the signal of leaden shots from the headquarters on Orchard Knob, the line moved rapidly and orderly forward. The rebel pickets discharged their muskets and ran into their rifle-pits. Our skirmishers followed on their heels. The line of battle was not far behind, and we saw the grey rebels swarm out of the ledge line of rifle-pits, in numbers which surprised us, and over the base of the hill. A few turned and fired their

pieces, but the greater number collected into the many roads which cross obliquely up its steep face, and went on to their top. Some regiments pressed on and swarmed up the steep sides of the ridge, and here and there a color was advanced beyond the lines. The attempt appeared most dangerous, but the advance was supported, and the whole line was ordered to storm the heights, upon which not less than forty pieces of artillery, and no one knew how many muskets, stood ready to slaughter the assailants. With cheers answering to cheers, the men swarmed upwards. They gathered to the point least difficult of ascent, and the line was broken. Color after color was planted on the summit, while musket and cannon vomited their thunder upon them. A well-directed shot from Orchard Knob exploded a rebel caisson on the summit, and the gun was seen galloping to the right, its driver lashing his horses. A party of our soldiers intercepted them, and the gun was captured with cheers.

"A fierce musketry fight broke out to the left, where, between Thomas and Sherman, a mile or two of the ridge was still occupied by the rebels. Bragg left the house in which he had held his headquarters, and rode to the rear as our troops crowded the hill on either side of him. General Grant proceeded to the summit, and then did we only know its height. Some of the captured artillery was put into position. Artillerists were sent for to work the guns. Caissons were searched for ammunition. The rebel log breastworks were torn to pieces and carried to the other side of the ridge, and used in forming barricades across. A strong line of infantry was formed in the rear of Baird's line, hotly engaged in a musketry contest with the rebels to the left, and a secure lodgment was soon effected. The other assault to the right of our centre gained the summit, and the rebels threw down their arms and fled. Hooker coming in favorable position, swept the right of the ridge and captured many prisoners.

"Bragg's remaining troops left early in the night, and the battle of Chattanooga, after days of manœuvring and fighting, was won. The strength of the rebellion in the centre is broken. Burnside is relieved from danger in East Tennessee, Kentucky and Tennessee are rescued.



Georgia and the southeast are threatened in the rear, and another victory is added to the chapter of 'Unconditional Surrender Grant.'

"To-night the estimate of captures is several thousands of prisoners and thirty pieces of artillery. Our loss for so great a victory is not severe.

"Bragg is firing the railroad as he retreats towards Dalton. Sherman is in hot pursuit.

"To-day I view the battle-field, which extends for six miles along Missionary Ridge and for several miles on Lookout Mountain. Probably not so well-directed, so well-ordered a battle has been delivered during the war. But one assault was repulsed—but that assault by calling to that point the rebel reserves, prevented them repulsing any of the others.

"A few days since Bragg sent to General Grant a flag of truce, advising him that it would be prudent to remove non-combatants who might be still in Chattanooga. No reply has been returned, but the combatants having removed from this vicinity, it is probable that non-combatants can remain without imprudence.

"M. C. MEIGS, *Quartermaster-General.*"

We insert this report entire, because it is so interesting and does full justice to all the brave officers and troops engaged, among whom history now abundantly attests that General Sheridan was one.

From the winter of 1863 to the spring of 1864, no general movement of Union troops took place in the department with which General Sheridan was then connected. The advance of General Schofield against Longstreet, of General Thomas against Johnston, and of Generals Sherman, Smith, and Grierson to the south of their respective positions, were clear indications of a more active field in that department. By his skilful dispositions of his immensely increased force, Lieutenant-General Grant was proving himself then, as subsequent events have so gloriously established him, master of the

situation. The fulness of time for General Sheridan was steadily approaching.

In March, 1864, rumors began to be afloat of a rebel raid into Kentucky. General Sheridan was exactly the man to oppose such a force. The rebel chiefs boastingly announced that they would ransack the country through its whole extent, sweeping every thing of value from the State, and leaving a waste behind. To accomplish this fell purpose the rebel force stationed at Bull Gap was fixed at twenty thousand strong. In the engagements which followed, the enemy were handsomely met by our troops; and their vaunted schemes of plunder and rapine, if not entirely thwarted, were materially checked.

The attention of the country was now mainly directed to the central field of the war in Virginia. The continual increase of our force in that direction was ominous of the settled purpose of Lieutenant-General Grant. After a large augmentation of the cavalry command, and an improvement of its *personnel*, in various ways, it was placed under the supreme control of General Sheridan. This was his first great opportunity. Victory records how well he fulfilled it.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### GENERAL SHERIDAN IN VIRGINIA.

THE month of April, 1864, found the busy note of preparation sounding louder than ever. A new era was opening on the old army of the Potomac. The personal staff of the Lieutenant-General was materially changed. All extra baggage was sent to the rear. The booths of the sutlers were summarily closed. Detailed troops began

to return in large numbers, and furloughs became less frequent. The time for action was at hand.

The first available line of advance for the enemy against Washington was by the old route of the valley of the Shenandoah. Our own defensive line was by the Orange and Alexandria railroad. These secured and held, and the capital of the nation was effectually defended. It was of the greatest importance, therefore, that the passes of the Shenandoah should be well guarded, and an army move by way of the Virginia Central railroad, from Aquia creek, or West Point, or Harrison's Landing, or along the south side of the James river.

In the completion of this concentrated movement of Lieutenant-General Grant, General Sheridan bore a conspicuous part. The record of the seven days of fighting, in the first part of May, 1864, has passed into history. From the fords of the Rapidan to the wastes of Stafford, from the forests of Spottsylvania to the passages of the Po; in short, from Culpepper to Petersburg, the whole field is covered with the glory of the Union arms. The victories of Sheridan were of the same class, although won on adjacent fields.

In the campaign in Virginia, General Sheridan's first service was to establish crossings, during the night of May 3d, at Germania and Ely's fords for the rest of the army, which he accomplished with General Wilson's third division at the former point, and General Gregg's second division at the latter, General Torbert's first division being for a time in the rear. Crossing on Wednesday, the 4th, the usual work of reconnoissance was carefully performed, Gregg's division scouring the roads in the vicinity of Ely's and westerly towards Fredericksburg, and Wilson's division doing the same service southerly and westerly around Germania. On Thursday, the 5th, the army advanced, in accordance with Grant's original plan

of the campaign. It will be remembered that our right flank and the enemy's left rested on the Rapidan, or so nearly on the river as to be well supported there, and easily protected by artillery. It remained to cover our left, as for the enemy to cover his left, with cavalry. The point of meeting was in the vicinity of Todd's Tavern, the location of which has become memorable. The chief interest of the place was the fact of the crossing of the Brock and Pamunkey roads at that point; and insignificant in other respects, it now became an important point to hold, either in view of advance or retreat, like the position at Quatre Bras, and Sombreffe.

On Thursday, the 5th, there was severe skirmishing in this region between the third division and Fitz Lee's cavalry, and our party were rapidly and continuously driven back. Chapman's brigade was chiefly engaged. The second division coming up in support, the enemy were in turn forced to retire, and a part of the lost ground recovered. Our loss was set at about forty killed and wounded, and as many prisoners. On Thursday, also, Colonel McIntosh's brigade of the third division became engaged in the direction of Parker's Store, suffering a loss of about seventy men.

On Friday, the 6th, while the great battle was going on, on the right, Stuart moved down and attacked our cavalry. General Torbert's first division,—now under command of General Merritt, General Torbert being ill,—held the right, and General Gregg's second division the left. Colonel Custer's first brigade, first division, and Colonel Gregg's brigade of the second division, received the chief attack, and the enemy was at last repulsed, after a long and varying fight. In the afternoon our cavalry fell back towards Aldrich's Tavern. Near this point, on Saturday, another severe fight occurred with Stuart, who seemed determined to get in our rear and at our supply

trains, parked at Chancellorsville, or at all events, to clear the roads for the withdrawal of Lee's army to Spottsylvania. The fight was severe and long continued, and fought, like the preceding and other cavalry skirmishes during the week, in dense woods, the men being dismounted, and engaging with carbines. They were supported also by horse batteries. We seem to have gained no advantage, and to have gradually removed our position from the region of Todd's Tavern and the road between that point and Parker's Store, back to Aldrich's, about four miles distant. Aldrich's is directly on the road between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, and at the point where the Pamunkey road debouches into the other. It was especially essential for the cavalry to cover Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg and the road between them, as well as to protect our trains and ambulances at both points.

The sudden departure of Lee, however, to his defences on the Po, relieved our cavalry of most of their duty in guarding the rear. On Sunday, the third and first divisions, following up the retreat of Lee, in advance of our infantry, came upon the enemy's rear-guard on the Brock road, and had a brisk skirmish with him, which, however, was ultimately taken off their hands by the fifth army corps. The remainder of Sunday was spent in preparing for the events of the morrow.

### THE RAID.

It having been determined to make a raid in the enemy's rear, forage, rations, and ammunition were all prepared by Sunday night. At daylight on Monday, the 9th, the column moved off, Merritt's first division in advance, Wilson's third in the centre, and Gregg's second in the rear. The march was first towards Fredericksburg, but



when about three or four miles from the town, the column turned to the right on to the Fredericksburg and Childsburg road, and, travelling southerly on this road, passed round the enemy's right flank to the south of Spottsylvania Court House towards Childsburg, at which latter point the advance halted. Starting thence on the same road, which then bears southerly and westerly, they reached and forded the North Anna river at Anderson's bridge, about dusk, two miles below Beaver Dam station. Custer's brigade of the first division at once occupied the station, and they were fortunate enough to overhaul a train of three hundred and seventy-eight of our wounded and prisoners, including two colonels and many other officers captured in the late operations, and moving "onward to Richmond." The small guard scattered, and a very pleasant and joyful rescue ensued. Half an hour more would have hurried them by railroad toward Libby prison.

The command now quickly fired the trains of cars, with the depot of supplies, destroying two locomotives, three long and heavy trains, with a large quantity of bacon, besides meal, flour, and other supplies for Lee's army. Eight miles of the Virginia Central railroad, connecting Richmond with Gordonsville, were then destroyed. The ties and bridges were burned and the rails twisted so as to make the work effectual. While this was going on in advance, the rebels had got scent of the movement, and harassed our flank and rear in strong force. The sixth Ohio, in the extreme rear, was roughly handled, and many of them wounded and taken prisoners by a vigorous charge straight through their columns. The first New Jersey supported them, and at last the rebels were driven off. The column bivouacked on the North Anna, occupying both sides, the enemy skirmishing a little through the night.

On Tuesday morning, May 10th, the rebels began to shell the camp, and there being no reason for remaining, our forces moved directly south, but found the enemy in front annoying our advance. The advance was continued, however, across Little river, with a short halt at Negro-foot. The South Anna was crossed at Ground Squirrel Bridge, which lies due south of Beaver Dam, and the bridge destroyed. The column camped near Goodall's, the rebels molesting it, as before, during the night, by sharpshooters.

At three o'clock on Wednesday morning, May 11th, General Davies' first brigade of Gregg's second division, was despatched to Ashland station, seven miles to the east, on the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac railroad. The first Massachusetts, reaching the train at daylight, charged through it, driving the rebel cavalry before them. They then fired the depot, and destroyed stores in considerable quantity, six miles of railroad, three culverts, two trestle bridges, several government buildings, a locomotive and three trains of cars. On the return the regiment was assailed by a severe fire from houses in the town, and left about thirty men in the hands of the enemy.

The advance, meanwhile, had pushed on, and destroyed track still farther along, on the same road, at Glen Allan station. As it approached Richmond, the column found its march disputed more and more stubbornly. At length the rebel cavalry, concentrated under General J. E. B. Stuart, at Yellow Tavern, attacked in force General Devens' brigade of Merritt's first division, our advance. A brisk and severe contest ensued, Custer's and Gill's brigades coming up in support. Wilson's division soon arrived and formed on the left of Merritt, and the enemy was driven toward Ashland.

A force, meanwhile, moving down the Brock road, entered the outermost or picket defences of Richmond.



This rebel line was taken by a gallant charge of General Custer, who rode at the head of his brigade. Here about a hundred prisoners were captured with a section of artillery complete. General J. E. B. Stuart and Lieutenant-Colonel Pate were mortally wounded.

During the night of the 11th, the third division made some reconnoissances, around the second line of the enemy's works, but no further advance was attempted in that direction, and our force turned next morning toward Meadow bridge on the Chickahominy. It had been destroyed, but was rebuilt under a galling fire, and crossed by the first division, Deven's brigade in advance. A brisk fight ensued, the rebels attacking both in front and rear. Generals Gregg and Wilson, however, succeeded in repulsing them in the rear, and the bridge being rebuilt, our forces crossed. Mechanicsville and Coal Harbor were next reached, and the column encamped toward evening at Gaines' Mills. The march of May 13th took the force to Bottom's bridge, and thence the column proceeded to Turkey Bend, and obtained supplies from General Butler, four miles distant, across the river, at Haxall Landing.

The official despatch of the War Department is as follows :

“WASHINGTON, *May* 14—11.40 P. M.

“An official despatch from General Sheridan, dated at Bottom's bridge, via Fortress Monroe, May 13, states that on the 9th instant he marched around the enemy's right flank, and on the evening of that day, reached the North Anna river, without opposition.

“During that night, he destroyed the enemy's depot at Beaver Dam, three large trains of cars, and one hundred cars, two fine locomotives, two hundred thousand pounds of bacon and other stores, amounting in all, to one million and a half of rebel rations ; also the telegraph and railroad track for about ten miles, embracing several culverts : recaptured three hundred and seventy-eight of our men,

including two colonels, one major and several other officers.

"On the morning of the 10th, he resumed operations, crossing the South Anna at Grand Squirrel bridge, and went into camp about daylight.

"On the 11th, he captured Ashland station, destroyed here one locomotive and a train of cars, an engine house, and two or three government buildings, containing a large amount of stores; also destroyed six miles of railroad, embracing three culverts, two trestle bridges, and the telegraph wire.

"About seven A. M., of the 11th, he resumed the march on Richmond. He found the rebel General Stuart with his cavalry concentrated at Yellow Tavern, immediately attacked him, and after an obstinate contest, gained possession of the Brockelton pike, capturing two pieces of artillery, and driving his forces back toward Ashland and across the north fork of the Chickahominy. At the same time a party charged down the Brock road and captured the first line of the enemy's works around Richmond.

"During the night he marched the whole of his command between the first and second line of the enemy's works on the bluffs overlooking the line of the Virginia Central railroad and the Mechanicsville turnpike.

"After demonstrating around the works and finding them very strong, he gave up the intention of assaulting, and determined to recross the Chickahominy at Meadow bridge. It had been partially destroyed by the enemy, but was repaired in about three hours, under a heavy artillery fire from a rebel battery. General Merritt made the crossing, attacked the enemy and drove him off handsomely. The pursuit continued as far as Gaines' Mills. The enemy, observing the recrossing of the Chickahominy, came out from his second line of works. A brigade of infantry and a large number of dismounted cavalry attacked the divisions of Generals Gregg and Wilson, but after a severe contest, were repulsed and driven behind their works. Gregg's and Wilson's divisions after collecting the wounded recrossed the Chickahominy. On the afternoon of the 12th, the corps encamped at Walnut Grove and Gaines' Mills. On the forenoon of the

13th, the march was resumed, and we encamped at Bottom's bridge. The command is in fine spirits. The loss of horses will not exceed one hundred. All the wounded were brought off, except about thirty cases of mortal wounds, and those were well cared for in the farmhouses of the country. The wounded will not exceed two hundred and fifty, and the total losses not over three hundred and fifty.

"The Virginia Central railroad bridges over the Chickahominy, and other trestle bridges—one sixty feet in length, one thirty feet—and the railroad for a long distance south of the Chickahominy, were destroyed.

"Great praise is given the division commanders, Generals Gregg, Wilson and Merritt, and Generals Custer and Davis, Colonels Gregg, Devine, Chapman, McIntosh and Gibbs, brigade commanders; and all the officers and men behaved splendidly.

"POSTSCRIPT.

"MAY 15—12.30 A. M.

"In a despatch, this moment received from Admiral Lee, he reports to the Secretary of the Navy, that the Richmond papers of May 14th, mention the death of General J. E. B. Stuart, shot in battle. This, no doubt, happened in the battle with Sheridan.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

The advance of the Union force to the Pamunkey, was effectively supported by Sheridan's cavalry. On the 25th of May, his entire body of horse rejoined the main army, having accomplished its work in other directions. Having left Haxall's, he had started from White House on the 23d, camped that night at Aylettsville, a village two miles south of the Mattaponi, and the scene of Kilpatrick's operations in the Stoneman raid. The next day he consumed in the march to Westerville station, the halt for the night being about nine miles to the east of that place. The day following, the cavalry again reported for duty, after an absence of sixteen days.

On Saturday morning, the 28th, our troops had obtained complete possession of Hanovertown and the neighboring region, having marched probably twenty-five miles, in the heat and dust, since Thursday night. All day long the troops continued to press forward, and before night the passage of the Pamunkey was effected. The weather continued clear and fine. The enthusiasm and spirit of the troops cannot be spoken of in terms of too high praise, and they did with alacrity all that was asked of them.

The battle began about noon of Saturday, Davies' brigade of Gregg's second division being in advance. Very soon the entire division was hotly engaged, and our cavalry force had a taste of the severe and deadly fighting to which the infantry are thoroughly accustomed. The rebel cavalymen were skilfully disposed, taking advantage of the neighboring woods. The artillery on both sides was briskly engaged. About two o'clock, while the fight was hottest, and Gregg's division had hardly been able, even with great loss, to hold the desired ground, Custer's Michigan brigade of Torbert's first division came up, and pressing gallantly forward, repulsed the rebel forces. This brigade was armed with the Spencer repeating rifle, which proved very efficient. Under the concentrated fire the rebels retired, leaving the battle-field in our possession, with a part of their killed and wounded in our hands. Our loss was about four hundred, and the enemy's not less. Fitz Hugh Lee and Hampton were in command of their forces.

While Gregg's and Torbert's divisions had been thus employed, for two days, in clearing the roads from Chesterfield to Hanovertown, in effecting crossings of the Pamunkey, and finally in skirmishing and reconnoitering toward the enemy south of that river, Wilson's third division was briskly engaged in tearing up the Virginia Central and Fredericksburg railroad to Richmond, west and north of

Sexton's Junction. Such a destruction was advisable from the fact that our forces had left the railroad communication between Richmond and Gordonsville free from infantry attack. The destruction of the Fredericksburg road must at once have convinced the enemy that that line had now been entirely abandoned, and that our forces had been swung around into the old battle-ground north-east of Richmond.

On Wednesday, June 1st, the cavalry fighting, with artillery firing, was resumed on both flanks. In front of Hancock, also, and elsewhere, there was heavy skirmishing. At Coal Harbor, the conflict lasted longest, as the enemy were determined to drive us out, and Sheridan's orders were to hold it. Hoke's division was completely repulsed by Sheridan's dismounted cavalry, fighting with carbines. McLaws' division then reinforced Hoke, and, other portions of Longstreet's corps joining subsequently, our further advance was checked about noon, the affair having been very creditable to our cavalymen.

On the 18th of June additional despatches were received at the War Department :

“WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, }  
“*Saturday, June 18, 1864—11 P. M.* }

“Despatches from General Sheridan have just been received. He reports a victory over the enemy at Trevilian station, on the Virginia Central railroad, a few miles south of Gordonsville, where General Lee, a few days ago, reported a rebel victory. The official report is as follows :

“I have the honor to report to you the arrival of my command at this point, and also to report its operations since leaving Newcastle ferry. I crossed the Pamunkey river on the 7th inst., marching via Aylett's and encamped on Herring creek. On the morning of the 8th, I resumed the march via Polecat station, and encamped three miles west of the station. On the 9th I marched through Childsburg and New Market, encamping on



East-Northeast creek, near Young's bridge. On the 10th I marched via Andrew's Tavern and Lerman's Store, crossing both branches of the North Anna, and encamped at Buck Childs, about three miles northeast of Trevilan station. My intention was to break the railroad at this station, march through Mechanicsville, cut the Gordonsville and Charlottesville railroad near Lyndsay's House and then to march on Charlottesville, but on our arrival at Buck Childs, I found the enemy's cavalry in my immediate front. On the morning of the 11th, General Torbert, with his division, and Colonel Gregg, of General Gregg's division, attacked the enemy. After an obstinate contest they drove him from successive lines of breast-works through an almost impassable forest back on Trevilan station. In the meantime General Custer was ordered, with his brigade, to proceed by a country road so as to reach the station in the rear of the enemy's cavalry. On his arrival at this point, the enemy broke into a complete rout, leaving his dead and nearly all his wounded in our hands; also twenty officers, five hundred men, and three hundred horses.

"These operations occupied the whole of the day. At night I encamped at Trevilan station, and on the morning of the 12th instant commenced destroying the railroad from this point to Louisa Court House. This was thoroughly done—the ties burned and the rails rendered unserviceable. The destruction of the railroad occupied until three o'clock of this day, when I directed General Torbert to advance with his division and General Davis's brigade of General Gregg's division, in the direction of Gordonsville, and attack the enemy, who had concentrated and been reinforced by infantry during the night, and had also constructed rifle-pits at a point about five miles from Gordonsville. The advance was made, but as the enemy's position was found too strong to assault, no general assault was made. On the extreme right of our lines a portion of the reserve brigade carried the enemy's works twice, and was twice driven therefrom by infantry. Night closed the contest. I found, on examination of the command, that there was not a sufficiency of ammunition left to continue the engagement. The next day trains of cars also came down to where we were engaged with the



enemy. The reports of prisoners and citizens were, that Pickett's old division was coming to prevent the taking of Gordonsville. I therefore, during the night and next morning, withdrew my command over the North Anna via Carpenter's ford, near Miner's bridge. In addition, the animals were, for the two entire days in which we were engaged, without forage. The surrounding country affords nothing but grazing of a very inferior quality, and generally at such points as were inaccessible to us.

"The cavalry engagement of the 12th was by far the most brilliant one of the present campaign. The enemy's loss was very heavy. They lost the following named officers in killed and wounded: Colonel McAllister, commanding a regiment, killed; Brigadier-General Resser, commanding a brigade, wounded, and Colonel Castor, commanding a regiment, wounded. My loss in killed and wounded will be about five hundred and seventy-five. Of this number four hundred and ninety are wounded. I brought off in my ambulances three hundred and seventy-seven—all that could be transported. The remainder were, with a number of rebel wounded that fell into my hands, left behind. Surgeons and attendants were detailed and remained in charge of them. I captured and have now with me three hundred and seventy prisoners of war, including twenty commissioned officers. My loss in captured will not exceed one hundred and sixty. They were principally from the fifth Michigan cavalry. This regiment gallantly charged down the Gordonsville road, capturing fifteen hundred horses and about eight hundred men, but were finally surrounded and had to give them up.

"When the enemy broke they hurried between General Custer's command and Colonel Gregg's brigade, capturing five caissons of Pennington's battery, three of which were afterwards recaptured, leaving in their hands two caissons.

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General Commanding.*"

## CHAPTER IX.

## AT FORT POWHATTAN.

THE official reports for the close of June state that on the 25th of that month Sheridan's cavalry, consisting of Torbert's and Gregg's divisions, succeeded in crossing the James safely, four or five miles above Fort Powhattan, where the pontoon bridges could be guarded by gunboats, and the enemy kept away from his rear. The wagon train was several miles in length, and the cavalry in addition, marching across two abreast, and about six thousand strong, made the passage an extended one. The enemy was active upon Sheridan's rear, but, with the aid of the gunboats, the latter was soon safe. It traversed an exhausted region, and what with terrible heat and drought, and roads pulverized into dust, the horses became badly jaded. Men and animals were both wearied by the long march and the lack of food and forage. Wade Hampton followed the column all the way, but did not venture to seriously harass it until towards its close, when he coolly crossed the Mattaponi and Pamunkey ahead of Sheridan, outrode him, and made an attack on the trains which Sheridan had fortunately left at White House. General Abercrombie, with two or three thousand men and some field artillery, and especially with the gunboats, drove off the enemy's cavalry, and, soon after, Sheridan came up, and charged on the retreating enemy. After a little rest and recruitment, Sheridan took up his guns and his long trains, and set out toward the James. So soon as the enemy discovered that he had got this valuable material with him, they again approached him. About ten miles south of White House, near Jones's bridge on the Chicka-

hominie, a slight skirmish ensued, on the 23d. Thence the column proceeded slowly towards Charles City Court House, and, near St. Mary's church, on the 24th, found the enemy had again anticipated him, and was disputing the way. One of the briskest and severest cavalry battles of the campaign ensued. General Gregg's division was protecting the trains against which the enemy's attack was directed. From two o'clock in the afternoon till evening he succeeded in keeping the enemy at bay, hurrying his wagons along as rapidly as possible, and fighting from one position to another. His artillery at length was got into position, and, although the enemy charged it frequently, they did not succeed in capturing it. At nightfall the enemy desisted from the pursuit, and the whole expedition got under cover of the gunboats near Wilcox's wharf.

### AT PETERSBURG.

About eight o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, the 29th, Captain Whittaker with forty men of the third New York cavalry cut his way through from Reims' to General Meade's headquarters, bringing news of Wilson's situation, and arriving about half-past ten A. M. Early in the afternoon, the sixth corps started in the lightest marching order to Wilson's assistance, and the same day, General Sheridan, crossing the James with his two divisions, proceeded as rapidly as possible in the same direction. The sixth corps arrived near the scene of action during the night, but the affair was already over. The men accordingly took position and occupied their time in destroying the railroad and telegraph for a few miles, and in burning several buildings. They found no enemy to oppose them at Reims'. About noon of the 30th it was ascertained that Sheridan was well on his way, and the corps then retraced its steps toward its former camping ground, going

into line of battle at night along the Jerusalem turnpike. Many contrabands were recovered by this advance of the sixth corps.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### LAST CAMPAIGN IN THE SHENANDOAH.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT visited the Maryland department of the army in person, in August, 1864. The result was that the forces destined for the defence of the valley, under General Sheridan, began assembling at Harper's Ferry. This force consisted of the sixth and nineteenth corps and Crook's division of infantry, and Torbert's division of cavalry, with some of Hunter's cavalry, being the brigades of Devins, Custer, Lowell, and Gibbs. On Wednesday, the 10th, the column started down the valley. There was some skirmishing on Thursday and Friday, near Winchester, and again at Newtown. On Saturday our forces were as far as Strasburg.

During the eventful month of August, General Sheridan continued his movements in the valley. The rebels being found in a strong position near Strasburg, and there being nothing to gain by dislodging them, except to open the way for a movement up the valley, for which he was not prepared, he thought it prudent to retire, especially as his communications were threatened by a portion of Longstreet's corps moving toward his rear from the opposite side of the Blue Ridge. This movement was met by General Merritt's division of cavalry, who on the 16th attacked and defeated General Kershaw's division of Longstreet's corps, capturing nearly three hundred prisoners, and giving General Sheridan time to withdraw

to the neighborhood of Charlestown. An attack was made on the 21st by the enemy, who had united his forces to follow up our retreat. An attempt was made to pierce our right near Summit Point, a feint being at the same time made on our left. The right of our line was formed by the sixth corps resting on the Martinsburg turnpike, about two miles south of Charlestown, the left extending toward Berryville and across the Berryville turnpike. The centre was held by the eighth corps, General Crook, and the right by the nineteenth corps. The movement against our right was met by the sixth corps, who bore the brunt of the engagement, fighting nearly all day and suffering heavy loss.

On the morning of Sunday, the 28th, General Sheridan was on the march, with his cavalry in advance, carefully reconnoitering in various directions. The enemy were found, however, near Smithfield, five or six miles to the southwest, by General Merritt, who attacked the rebel cavalry vigorously, driving them through the town and beyond Opequan creek, where he came in contact with infantry. General Custer's brigade of cavalry, with Ransom's battery, were moved across the creek for the purpose of making a reconnoissance towards Bunker Hill. But after an encounter with the enemy's skirmish line, they retired across the stream, followed by infantry, who attempted to outflank them. Our cavalry accordingly fell back upon Smithfield, in season to escape the movement. Here they were met by General Rickett's division of infantry, before whose advance the enemy found it prudent rapidly to withdraw. Our loss in this affair was less than one hundred, including Dr. Rulison, medical director on General Torbert's staff. Lieutenant Hoyer of the first regular cavalry was also killed. Some prisoners were captured by our cavalry.

It was evidently General Sheridan's plan to securely



hold his position in the valley, attempting no venturesome expedition, but keeping his force in hand to checkmate any movement of Early looking to an advance northward.

General Grant arrived at Monocacy on the evening of the 5th of August. A consultation took place next day between Generals Grant, Hunter and Sheridan, and when, at noon, General Grant returned to his own army, General Sheridan proceeded to Harper's Ferry, and, at the latter point, began to concentrate his troops. On the 7th day of August, Sheridan assumed command of the middle military division, comprising the old departments of Washington, of the Susquehanna, of West Virginia, and the middle department. In a word, all the scattered commands in the valley, and in Maryland and Pennsylvania, were now united into one. At the same time, headquarters, which had been at Monocacy, were removed to Harper's Ferry. In the enemy's movements, great changes were going on. After having driven us away from the Potomac with a ridiculously small force, his weakness had at length been exposed in spite of his devices to conceal it. On Saturday, the 6th, the day before Sheridan assumed command, the enemy was entirely out of Maryland, and some distance up the valley. On Sunday, the day of his assuming command, our cavalry had occupied Hagerstown, and the enemy was found to be deliberately retreating toward Winchester. The same day Averill's cavalry division severely repulsed an equal cavalry force under McCausland and Johnson, far to the southwest, at Moorsfield, capturing four hundred prisoners, four cannon, and three flags, and inflicting a large loss in killed and wounded, with a surprisingly small loss on our part. Moorsfield is on the east side of the south fork of the Potomac, one hundred and thirty-one miles northwest of Richmond, forty-one west of Winchester, and forty-five south of Cumberland.



Such were the favorable circumstances—with the enemy entirely in Virginia—under which Sheridan collected the troops assigned to him. The sixth army corps occupied Halltown, not far from Harper's Ferry. Torbert's first division of cavalry had already come up from City Point to Washington, and marching from Washington on the 5th, reached Harper's Ferry on the 8th. Detachments of cavalry at once occupied Charlestown and Shepherdstown, in which only small squads of the enemy were found. The brigades of Lowell and Devin came up on Tuesday, the 9th, and, on that day, General Torbert took command of all the cavalry of the middle division, turning his own division over to General Merritt. Sheridan's troops consisted now chiefly of the sixth, eighth and nineteenth corps of infantry, and the infantry of the old army of the Kanawha, under Crook. A part of the nineteenth corps, however, was still in Louisiana. His cavalry comprised the entire first division of Potomac cavalry, Averill's division, Kelly's command, and Lowell's brigade, the latter having been till recently near Washington. Wilson's second cavalry division joined Sheridan soon after, having come up from City Point, and leaving Washington for Winchester on the 13th.

Against this strong and compact army, General Early was now able to muster, according to all reports, drawn from many discrepant accounts, and some trustworthy sources, about eighteen thousand men. It seems to have consisted, first, of two infantry corps, under Rhodes and Breckinridge. Rhodes had his own old division and Ramseur's, and various reserves in the valley, the whole estimated at about seven thousand men. Ramseur's division comprised the brigades of Lillie (formerly of Pegram), Evans and Johnson. Breckinridge had the divisions of Wharton and Gordon, four thousand five hundred or five thousand strong, the former having two

brigades, and the latter (like Rhodes' old division) consisting of four. Ransom's cavalry consisted of about five thousand five hundred troops, divided into four brigades, under Imboden, McCausland, Jackson and Vaughan. The artillery, under Long, consisted of three battalions, and not far from fifty guns.

### THE ADVANCE.

At sunrise on Wednesday morning, the 10th of August, Sheridan began to move out his forces from Halltown for the repossession of the valley. The force reached Charlestown in two hours, where the nineteenth corps struck off to the left for Berryville, preceded by the cavalry brigades of Custer and Gibbs. Still further to the left marched Crook's infantry, with mounted men in advance. Finally, on the right, the sixth corps, preceded by the brigades of Devin and Lowell, kept on the Winchester road a few miles, and then turned off toward Smithsfield, and toward the nineteenth. The weather was terribly hot, and the dust, heat, and drought, made it difficult to push the men on. At Berryville, the roads of the two right columns met; and about noon the several cavalry brigades of Custer, Devin, Gibbs, and Lowell, there formed junction, and marched toward the Millwood and Winchester pike, along a cross-road. Just beyond Berryville, four of the enemy were taken in a barn, while engaged in threshing wheat; and evidences of the employment of many others in the same labor soon accumulated. The enemy's soldiers had sown much of the wheat in the spring, and were now harvesting it and transporting it to Richmond.

Four miles from Berryville, near Dr. Randolph's, a few of the enemy's skirmishers were posted to defend the Winchester pike. The sixth Pennsylvania and first New York, of Gibbs' reserve brigade, easily drove them off, after a half hour's skirmishing, with a loss of only

about twenty men on our side, all wounded. Lowell also had a slight skirmish, on the road from Charlestown to Summit Point, and captured a few prisoners. The infantry bivouacked in the vicinity of Berrysville, after a march of about fifteen miles, on the different roads they had taken, with the sixth corps on the right, the nineteenth in the centre, and Crook's troops on the left. The cavalry, in advance, held the Winchester and Millwood pike, and picketed all the neighborhood. Colonel Cesnola took possession of Millwood with his regiment, capturing there a few horses and cattle. Lieutenants Mix and Lenox, of the second cavalry, were severely wounded in Gibbs' skirmishes. So ended Wednesday.

#### AFFAIR AT NEWTOWN.

Next day, Thursday, the army took the road from Berryville to Winchester, the cavalry, of course, in advance. Custer's Michigan brigade led off, and near Sulphur Springs bridge, about three miles from Winchester, encountered the enemy in some force. A sharp skirmish by the first, fifth, sixth and seventh Michigan cavalry, and Ransom's battery, on our part, took place. The enemy had no artillery. The fight lasted about two hours, when we were flanked, checked, and driven back. Our loss was only about thirty men, including Captain Mathers, who was killed. General Custer withdrew his command, having attained his object, which was to verify the fact that Early had begun to move his command up the valley from Winchester the day before.

Meanwhile, Deven's second brigade, followed by Gibbs' reserve brigade, of the first cavalry division, had moved off on the road toward White Post, with the design of gaining the flank of the enemy, and of arriving by a circuitous route at Newtown, on the Winchester and Strasburg pike, along which the enemy was now retreat-

ing. Cesnola's fourth New York, in advance, soon encountered the enemy, and had brisk skirmishing near White Post, and beyond it, driving the enemy's skirmishers to their supports. At length, at the cross-roads, on the stonepike to Front Royal, Cesnola found himself checked, and the rest of the second brigade was sent in. The sixth New York was repulsed with some loss in a mounted charge. The fourth, sixth, and ninth New York, and seventeenth Pennsylvania, then advanced, dismounted, supported by Pierce's battery. The fight lasted from eleven till two, with no decisive result, though the enemy gave way some distance toward Newtown. His force consisted of Jones' Tennessee brigade of mounted infantry, with three field-pieces. His position was very strong, and, until he was forced from it, he succeeded in inflicting a heavy loss on our troops. But the cross-roads were carried, and, at four o'clock, Crook came up with his infantry, relieved Deven, and, passing on toward Front Royal, bivouacked several miles south of the cross-roads. Deven's brigade then marched on to the relief of Gibbs, who had moved to White Post, and thence nearly to Newtown, and was now hotly engaged. The first and second cavalry, the first New York and sixth Pennsylvania, and battery D, of the second artillery, attacked the enemy, but were driven back. Fortunately, Deven's whole brigade arrived at this juncture, and succeeded in checking the enemy. The latter fell back to the woods, and our forces also retired about a mile, and bivouacked, with a strong picket guard in front. The object of the day's march was not attained, as the enemy, by hard fighting, had succeeded in retaining Newtown, and covered the passage of his trains, which passed on a parallel road, a little west of the Strasburg pike. Our total loss was probably about two hundred and fifty or three hundred, of which one hundred and fifty were ascribed to Gibbs,

and about sixty to Deven. Custer's loss is not stated. The infantry had a severe march in the torrid weather, but no fighting; the only casualties being the numerous ones from sunstroke. They passed beyond Winchester and Millwood, now evacuated by the enemy, and camped, at night, six miles to the southeast of the former place. Early, fathoming the design of Sheridan to flank him, had begun his withdrawal from Winchester to Newtown on Wednesday morning, and continued it till Thursday morning. About ten o'clock of the latter day, Lowell's cavalry charged through the town, but effected nothing, for the rear-guard had already moved out at the other end. The fighting of the day was entirely conducted by Early's rear-guard.

#### THE ADVANCE CONTINUED.

Early on Friday, the 12th, the column moved forward again, having ascertained that the enemy had retreated. Lowell's brigade had the cavalry advance to Newtown, and thence the march to Strasburg in three columns, Lowell on the right, Gibbs in the centre on the pike, and Custer on the left. The ninth New York reconnoitered toward Front Royal, which contained a picket of the enemy. The cavalry pushed on, skirmishing most of the way to Cedar creek, above Middletown. There, about noon, a force of the enemy was found in position on a hill in front of Strasburg, from which they shelled and drove back the cavalry skirmishers. The latter were then relieved by the eighth corps, which had now arrived. A reconnoissance, made by the fourth New York to Faucet gap, in North mountain, discovered no enemy there. One made by the second brigade on the back road to Strasburg, resulted in a slight skirmish with the rear guard of one of Early's trains, who drove off the sixth New York, and continued on unmolested. The enemy



remained encamped on the southwest side of Cedar creek, in some old breastworks, and our forces bivouacked on the northeast side of the creek. There was brisk skirmishing all through the day, and some spiteful shelling across the creek at evening, but no general engagement. On passing through Stephensburg and Middletown in the forenoon, our forces had met no enemy. Cedar creek is about three miles north of Strasburg. The three days' marching had not been remarkable. But, considering the heat, dust, and drought, very good time had been made.

Saturday morning, our skirmishers got into Strasburg, beyond which the enemy had retired during the night. But they withdrew again on the reappearance of the enemy, and the whole army, which had again started out, was recalled, and during Saturday and Sunday, our forces remained inactive around Cedar creek. Strasburg was retained by the enemy. Sunday and Monday there was light skirmishing. Sheridan's headquarters were one mile from the creek, on a spot similarly used in turn by Fremont, Sigel, and Hunter. On Sunday evening, a skirmish line of the sixth and eighth corps was pushed out, and easily captured the heights in front of Strasburg, the enemy's weak line retiring into the town. Our loss was only twenty or thirty. Next morning the enemy's pickets, which were all the force that had held the town for two days, retired. But works on Fisher's hill, beyond Strasburg, still commanded it. Once more Sheridan moved forward from Charlestown, to which point he had retired. The advance began early on Saturday, the 3d. At ten and a-half A. M., a sharp fight took place between the second cavalry division and Lomax's cavalry, the latter attacking our line near Darkesville, seven miles south of Martinsburg. The cavalry successfully repulsed the enemy, and drove him from the field, suffering a loss of less than fifty men.



Meanwhile, Crook's infantry reached Berryville about noon. While encamped for rest and dinner, they were suddenly attacked by the enemy. Crook hastily formed his men, consisting of the Kanawha troops and portions of the eighth corps, and a severe battle ensued, lasting till after dark. The enemy was repulsed, with severe loss, including sixty or seventy prisoners captured. Our loss was estimated at about three hundred. The rest of the army now came up and went into position near Berryville.

### BATTLE OF CROOKED RUN.

With a view to prevent the enemy from flanking us by way of the gaps in the Blue Ridge, and to cover our retreat, on Sunday evening Deven's cavalry brigade was sent out from Cedar creek, where the main army was encamped, a few miles to the southeast, toward Front Royal. A small stream runs from Chester gap past Front Royal into the Shenandoah at this point. Near by, the two forks of the Shenandoah unite. A part of Kershaw's division, having taken part in the actions near Malvern Hill, had come by rail to Mitchell station, and had just marched thence to Front Royal. On Tuesday morning, the 16th, Custer's brigade was sent across to support Deven, who was about four miles from Front Royal, Gibbs' brigade following. Custer arrived soon after noon, and his men went into camp, and made themselves comfortable. Deven held the right and Custer the left. But the line was very suddenly roused from its equanimity by the appearance of the enemy in two columns, marching down the Winchester and Front Royal pike, to cross the Shenandoah and attack our troops. A column of infantry made for the ford, and one of cavalry for the bridge. Custer quickly got his command into position, holding the left of the pike with Ransom's battery, and the first, fifth, sixth and seventh Michigan.

A brisk artillery duel took place, the enemy using eight pieces, but with no great damage to us. But, having seized and crossed the river, and driven in our skirmishers, he advanced to carry our batteries, which were advantageously posted. After a brisk charge, he was repulsed on our right, and driven across the river again, the fourth and sixth New York, of Deven's brigade, charging him gallantly, and capturing each a flag. Meanwhile, however, he secured a good position for his artillery, and next attempted to turn our left. A series of sharp charges and counter charges between the brigade of Kershaw's division which had crossed, and Custer's cavalry brigade, now ensued, prolonging the battle till after dark. Custer had posted his regiments well, and the assaults of the enemy were repulsed with heavy loss to him. Our cavalry then made several handsome mounted charges, and the enemy, foiled on the left, as he had been previously on the right, fell back across the stream. But a regiment sent round to the ford, cut off and captured about one hundred and fifty of his men, before they could reach the river. The enemy's force consisted of a part of Kershaw's division, and two small cavalry brigades under Lomax and Wickham. Ours was composed of Custer's and Deven's brigades, under command of General Merritt. The second brigade captured one hundred and forty prisoners, and the first over sixty. About two hundred (one account says two hundred and seventy-six) prisoners in all, including two field officers, were captured by us, and over thirty of the enemy's dead were left on the field, including a colonel, besides many wounded. Our total loss was only sixty or seventy.

During the night the enemy demonstrated against our lines, but effected nothing important. Early the next morning the cavalry fell back on the pike, in the track of the infantry column. On the retreat, the orders were for

the destruction or capture of all stock and grain, hay, and every thing which could afford sustenance to man or beast. These orders were strictly executed, the fields and gardens being ravaged and swept clean. A Richmond paper said :

“ The enemy, as they retired from Strasburg, literally destroyed every thing in the way of food for man or beast. With their immense cavalry they extended their lines from Front Royal, in Warren county, to the North Mountains, west of Strasburg, and burnt every bushel of wheat in stack, barn, or mill, in Frederick, Warren, and Clark, as well as oats and hay. They have really left absolutely nothing in those three counties. They drove before them every horse, cow, sheep, hog, calf, and living animal, from the country. What the people are to do God only knows. General Early, two weeks since, gave orders not to have a bushel of grain taken from below Strasburg, as hardly enough was left for the citizens. Our corn crop, for want of labor to cultivate, and the drought, is a failure—so that starvation on the border is no joke.”

The enemy followed close on our heels, and reached Winchester before night of Wednesday. Our wagon train, starting on Monday, was now well advanced toward Harper's Ferry, and the sixth corps, which brought up the rear of the infantry column, had left Winchester on the morning of Wednesday. Penrose's (New Jersey) first brigade, first division of the corps, had been left behind as a support to Torbert's cavalry. About one o'clock of Wednesday afternoon, the enemy's advance came up the Winchester and Newton pike, and attacked Colonel Penrose, who lay about a mile beyond Winchester, toward Kernstown. Our cavalry were quickly driven in, and left the brunt of the battle to the infantry. Heavy skirmishing went on from one to four o'clock, the enemy, of course, gradually drawing up his forces. The brigade numbered only about five hundred men, and had to be deployed in skirmishing order with cavalry on its flanks. The cavalry gave way, and retired to the town, leaving

Penrose still at his post, behind fences, trees, and walls. At nightfall the enemy had concentrated troops enough to charge, and the gallant infantry brigade was, of course, quickly flanked on both sides and broken to pieces. It had stood its ground bravely to the last against overwhelming force, being attacked by Early's main column. At length Penrose, with such officers and men as could escape, retreated through the town toward Clifton and Martinsburg. Our loss, which was chiefly in prisoners, probably reached three hundred men. At night the enemy occupied Winchester, and was agreeably disappointed to find it whole and unburned. A Richmond paper says—"It is but justice to say, when General Emory, of the nineteenth corps, was here, he kept perfect order, and protected all property in town."

This same night our cavalry bivouacked at Berryville, and next day took up its retreat toward Harper's Ferry. "Mosby's gang," meanwhile, had been busy, as usual, on our flanks. On Monday night he had boldly surprised and attacked the fifth New York cavalry, just as it went into camp near Berryville, and killed two men, wounded several more, and captured about twenty horses. All the week Mosby's guerrillas—for whatever is done near the Potomac is at once laid to Mosby—were very active. On Tuesday and Wednesday, Lieutenant Walker and two men of the first cavalry were killed, and Lieutenant Gwyer of the fifth, with several others, were wounded by guerrillas between Charlestown and Berryville. On Thursday, some guerrillas in citizens' dress accosted an advanced post of the fifth Michigan cavalry, picketed at Snicker's gap, and while conversing, suddenly fired, killed the corporal, captured two men, and hastily escaped. Several other soldiers were wounded or taken prisoners, under like circumstances, the same day and next. On Friday, General Custer ordered a detachment

of the fifth Michigan to destroy some houses of disloyal citizens in retaliation. While so engaged, the squad was charged upon by Mosby's men, in equal or superior numbers, and broke and fled in confusion. Many were overtaken, and surrendering, were shot, and either killed or left for dead. Ten men were instantly murdered after surrendering. Many neighboring houses were destroyed in retaliation for the butchery. The massacre took place near the Snicker's gap pike. Our loss was fifteen killed and three wounded. These figures, as well as incontestable evidence of the survivors, show the nature of the affair. A Richmond paper confirms the account also, and mentions it with approval. Our cavalry on Friday still held Berryville; but many stragglers from camp were captured, as were also laborers on the railroad. Some of the soldiers met no mercy from their captors.

During the retreat, Averill, who commanded at Martinsburg, had continued to hold it, though by Thursday there was great alarm there. And, indeed, there had already begun in Maryland the old story of "another invasion of the North by Early." Refugees arrived at Hagerstown in large numbers, and the Maryland farmers ran their stock into Pennsylvania again for safety. On Thursday, the 18th, Averill abandoned Martinsburg with his main force, leaving one cavalry company in the town. A general stampede of the people in all that region took place, and reports of Sheridan's defeat were current. The merchants in Hagerstown packed their goods and sent them north. The quartermaster's stores were loaded on a train for Frederick. The Hagerstown stores were closed, and the streets were deserted by the citizens. The sick and wounded were carried to Harrisburg. This was a specimen of what occurred in the whole region. This was "Early's fourth invasion!"

Averill, meanwhile, held the fords from Shepardstown



to Williamsport, and once more our forces were crowded back to Maryland, and addressed their energies to preventing a crossing of the Potomac.

### AFFAIRS AT SUMMIT POINT.

On Sunday, the 21st, Sheridan had got his troops into a very advantageous position, about two miles out from Charlestown, near Summit Point, from the Smithfield to the Berryville pike, with the sixth corps on the right, the eighth in the centre, and the nineteenth on the left, the latter overlapping the Berryville pike. About eight o'clock, Early came up, on his road to Martinsburg, and with a part of his columns attacked our advanced cavalry skirmishers, on the right and left, easily driving them in. His main body moved off across our right; but with a small force he drove back Wilson's cavalry division from its good position on Summit Point, with very great loss. Mackintosh's brigade alone is said to have lost nearly three hundred men and officers. Soon after, the cavalry being routed, the enemy threw a few brigades against the sixth corps and the right of the eighth, under a heavy fire of shells. The cavalry meanwhile had fallen through Charlestown, and beyond the town, except a part, which got out on the extreme left of the nineteenth corps, and dismounting, threw up breastworks. But the fighting which ensued was all on the right. It lasted from ten o'clock through the day. The sixth corps steadily advanced, and drove the enemy's skirmishers back, until they came upon the enemy's own line of battle. Then, at dark, they retired to their original position, after very heavy skirmishing all day. Cannonading was kept up still later. The losses in the sixth corps were quite large, the second division losing about four hundred officers and men.



On Wednesday, the 24th, Johnson's brigade of Duval's division, and a brigade of Thorburn's division, Crook's corps, with Lowell's cavalry brigade, reconnoitered the enemy, who still persisted in not attacking us. The command moved out on our left, near the Charlestown pike, and coming upon the enemy's picket line, endeavored to flank and capture it. The enemy opened sharply on Duval's flank, on discovering him; but was pushed back into the corn-fields, toward his main line. Being now reinforced by infantry and a battery, he opened a hot fire upon us, evidently thinking it a general advance. Having ascertained that Early was still at Charlestown in force, with his pickets out toward Bunker Hill, our men fell back to their lines. The enemy also drew up to their old skirmish line. Our loss was about sixty—the enemy's not quite so great.

On Thursday, the 25th, Torbert's cavalry reconnoitered toward Leetown in full force, Wilson's division moving out from Halltown and uniting with Merritt's at Kearneysville. At the latter place, the enemy's skirmishers retired, but finally resisted with a battery and with musketry. The troops were dismounted, and Custer became quickly engaged on the right of the Shepards town road. On his left was McIntosh, and on the latter's left was Chapman, both of Wilson's division. For a while the enemy poured in a heavy fire, but at length our commands were got into working order, and drove the enemy back. Our batteries also were effectively served on him. But soon the enemy turned the tide, drove our men precipitately to their old position, and began to flank them. His battery played accurately upon us. In a word, the first and third divisions were badly handled, and fell back as rapidly as possible toward Harper's Ferry, abandoning Kearneysville, which they had held in the morning. A running fight ensued from eleven o'clock till dark, at which

time Merritt's (first) division was safe in camp at Bolivar Heights. But Custer, who had the rear in the retreat, was hotly pursued, and at Shepardstown found himself cut off from the Halltown road, on which he intended to march. Gibbs and Di Cesnola fought the enemy with great vigor, but Custer was driven toward the Potomac, which he crossed, and thus escaped, the enemy not caring to follow, but holding the Potomac from Shepardstown to Williamsport. Our losses were reported as not much above two hundred killed and wounded. Among the officers killed was Major Schlick. The enemy had brought up from Charlestown a strong infantry force.

About five o'clock the same evening, Averill's picket-post near Falling Waters was attacked, and a slight skirmish ensued. The next morning, the 26th, the enemy shelled Williamsport also, and demonstrated as if about to cross at the ford. A spirited fight occurred, but Averill repulsed the enemy. At night, he appeared at Dam No. 4. Averill again thwarted his attempts or feints at crossing, whichever they were. All along the neighborhood of Williamsport the enemy had skirmishers, but none of them succeeded in crossing the river. Scouting and skirmishing were constant. On Friday afternoon, Thorburn's second division of Crook's corps, and Lowell's cavalry, pushed a reconnoissance toward Halltown. The infantry moved out in front, and the cavalry on the left. The former soon encountered the enemy, and after a sharp contest of twenty minutes, drove him to the cover of his artillery in the rear. At the moment they broke, Lowell dashed in on the flank, delivered a sharp fire, and cut off and captured sixty-nine prisoners, including six officers, one a lieutenant-colonel. The enemy's second line opened with vigor on our troops as they advanced, but the latter were soon retired, having gained the information sought for. An artillery duel went on for half an hour after the

recall of the troops. The affair was quite similar to the reconnoissance of Wednesday, the troops employed being about the same, and the ground traversed also the same. Our loss did not exceed one hundred, while the enemy's was greater. Sheridan telegraphed that during the day he had captured one hundred and one prisoners, and inflicted a loss in killed and wounded of one hundred and fifty. He also said that during the night the enemy fell back to Smithfield or Middleway.

### FISHER'S HILL.

By Wednesday morning, the 21st, Sheridan's army was all in good position. The enemy was posted with his right on the north fork of the Shenandoah, and his left on the North Mountain. His line, running westerly, extended across the Strasburg valley. There was considerable manœuvering for position till after mid-day. Crook's eighth corps was on our right, Wright's sixth in the centre, and Emory's nineteenth on the left. While Emory demonstrated on the left, Rickett's division of the sixth corps advanced directly in front, and Averill drove in the enemy's skirmishers. Under cover of these demonstrations, Crook moved out to the extreme right, and after an arduous march, swept about and flanked the enemy's left. At four or five o'clock in the evening, a gallant charge was made by Crook, who carried the enemy before him, turning him out of his intrenchments in great confusion. At the same time, Wright attacked in the centre, and Emory on the left, and Averill skirted along the base of the South Mountain. With great rapidity, the sixth corps broke in the enemy's centre, separating his two wings, and in great disorganization, the enemy broke and fled toward Woodstock. Artillery, horses, wagons, rifles, knapsacks, and canteens, were abandoned in the flight and lined the road. It was a

very disastrous defeat. Eleven hundred prisoners and sixteen pieces of artillery were captured, besides a great many caissons and artillery horses, with ammunition, small arms, and such spoils as fall from an army retreating under such disadvantages.

No sooner had Early abandoned his strong position, than Sheridan was on his trail. He marched his troops on the night after the battle to Woodstock, and there halted, next morning, for rest and rations. Averill, pushing on in advance, drove the enemy to Mount Jackson, twenty-five miles south of Strasburg, where he halted and made a stand, checking our advance with infantry and artillery. From Woodstock, Sheridan moved rapidly up the valley to Mount Jackson, and thence to New Market, and on Sunday, the 25th, his headquarters were reported to be at Harrisonburg, with his cavalry moving toward Staunton. On Thursday, the 25th, and Friday, the 26th, reconnoissances were made by our cavalry to discover the enemy's position. On the former day General Torbert advanced on our right up the Winchester pike, coming in contact with the enemy in force near Leetown, a portion of his force narrowly escaping capture, being flanked by the rebel infantry. A running fight was maintained until night, our troops falling back to a safe position between Shepardstown and Harper's Ferry, with a loss estimated at between one and two hundred. On the following day, Friday, the 26th, General Crook, on the left, ordered out Wells' brigade of Thorburn's division. Here the enemy developed little strength, giving way before our forces with the loss of a hundred prisoners, most of whom were captured by Colonel Lowell, of the second Massachusetts cavalry. On Saturday, Torbert encountered, near Luray, the enemy's cavalry, who were trying to operate in our rear. A sharp engagement followed, the enemy being driven up the valley, with the loss

of seventy-four prisoners, besides his killed and wounded. Next day Torbert's cavalry joined Sheridan beyond New Market, and started on to Staunton. It was estimated that the enemy's loss in prisoners during all the recent engagements, reached five thousand, while his killed and wounded amounted to three thousand. Our entire loss was probably not greater than four thousand.

As the result of this reconnoissance, the enemy were discovered to have left our front, and on the morning of Sunday, the 28th, General Sheridan was on the march, with his cavalry in advance, carefully reconnoitering in various directions. The enemy were found, however, near Smithfield, five or six miles to the southwest, by General Merritt, who attacked the rebel cavalry vigorously, driving them through the town and beyond Opequan creek, where he came in contact with infantry. General Custer's brigade of cavalry, with Ransom's battery, were moved across the creek for the purpose of making a reconnoissance toward Bunker Hill. But after an encounter with the enemy's skirmish line, they retired across the stream, followed by infantry, who attempted to outflank them. Our cavalry accordingly fell back upon Smithfield in season to escape the movement. Here they were met by General Rickett's division of infantry, before whose advance the enemy found it prudent rapidly to withdraw. Our loss in this affair was less than one hundred, including Dr. Rulison, medical director on General Torbert's staff. Lieutenant Hoyer of the first regular cavalry was also killed. Some prisoners were captured by our cavalry.

### PORT REPUBLIC.

On retreating from Mount Jackson, Early paused at the point where the battle of New Market Hill was fought by Sigel. But he soon abandoned the place, and retreated



on Port Republic, and thence to Brown's gap. This latter point was now held by him in force. It is in the Blue Ridge, eight miles southeast of Port Republic, twenty miles east of Staunton, and fifteen northeast of Waynesboro'. Sheridan pursued to Port Republic, destroying seventy-five wagons and four caissons. From Harrisonburg, Torbert, with Wilson's cavalry division and one brigade of Merritt's, marched to Staunton, which he entered at 8 A. M., of Monday the 26th, and there destroyed a large quantity of the enemy's property of various kinds. Thence he marched southeasterly to Waynesboro', threw the iron bridge over the South river at that point, into the river, and destroyed the bridge over Christiana Creek, and the railroad from Staunton to Waynesboro'. At Waynesboro' other government property was destroyed. But finding the tunnel defended by troops, Torbert retired to Harrisonburg by way of Staunton. Large supplies of forage and grain were found between Harrisonburg and Staunton, which passed from the enemy's possession to ours.

These movements, however, were not made without fighting. Some shelling and skirmishing in the vicinity of Port Republic, between General Merritt and the enemy occurred on the 26th. At the same time, Powell, commanding Averill's old division, pressed on towards Staunton. Both Merritt and Powell then attempted to carry Brown's gap, but were repulsed, and fell rapidly back, the former remaining at night near Port Republic, and the latter at Weyer's Cave.

#### OFFICIAL DESPATCHES.

"NEAR BERRYVILLE, 7 P. M., *September 13, 1864.*

"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT, *City Point* :

"This morning, I sent General Getty's division of the sixth corps, with two brigades of cavalry, to the crossing



of the Summit Point and Winchester road over the Opequan creek, to develop the force of the enemy at the crossing in that vicinity. Rhodes', Ramseur's, Gordon's, and Wharton's divisions were found on the west bank. At the same time, Generals Wilson and McIntosh's brigades of cavalry dashed up the Winchester pike, drove the rebel cavalry at a run, came in contact with Kershaw's division, charged it, and captured the eighth South Carolina regiment, sixteen officers and one hundred and forty-five men, and its battle-flag, and Colonel Hennegan, commanding brigade, with a loss of only two men killed and two wounded. Great credit is due to Generals Wilson and McIntosh, the third New Jersey and second Ohio. The charge was a gallant one. A portion of the second Massachusetts reserve brigade made a charge on the right of the line, and captured one officer and eleven men of Gordon's division of infantry. Our loss in the reconnaissance is very light.

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

---

"WINCHESTER, VA., *September* 19, 1864—7:30 P. M.  
"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT:

"I have the honor to report that I attacked the forces of General Early, over the Berryville pike, at the crossing of Opequan creek, and after a most stubborn and sanguinary engagement, which lasted from early in the morning until five o'clock in the evening, completely defeated him, driving him through Winchester, capturing about two thousand five hundred prisoners, five pieces of artillery, nine army flags, and most of their wounded. The rebel Generals Rhodes and Gordon were killed, and three other general officers were wounded. Most of the enemy's wounded and all their killed fell into our hands. Our losses are severe. Among them is General D. A. Russell, commanding a division of the sixth corps, who was killed by a cannon ball. Generals Upton, McIntosh, and Chapman, were wounded. I cannot tell our losses. The conduct of the officers and men was most superb. They charged and carried every position taken up by the rebels from Opequan creek to Winchester.

"The rebels were strong in numbers, and very obstinate in fighting. I desire to mention to the Lieutenant-General commanding the army, the gallant conduct of Generals Wright, Crook, Emory, Torbert, and the officers and men under their command. To them the country is indebted for this handsome victory. A more detailed report will be forwarded.

"P. H. SHERIDAN,

*"Major-General Commanding."*

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, }  
*"Tuesday, September 26, 1864—12 M. }*

"MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN A. DIX :

"The following despatch has just been received, giving further particulars of Sheridan's great victory. A salute of one hundred guns has just been given :

"HARPER'S FERRY, *Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1864—11:40 A. M.*

"HON. E. M. STANTON :

"Just received, the following official from General Sheridan, dated 1 A. M. to-day.

"GENERAL : We fought Early from daylight till between six and seven P. M. We drove him from Opequan creek through Winchester and beyond the town. We captured two thousand five hundred to three thousand prisoners, five pieces of artillery, nine battle-flags, and all the rebel wounded and dead.

"Their wounded in Winchester amount to some three thousand. We lost in killed, General David Russell, commanding a division of the sixth army corps, and wounded, Generals Chapman, McIntosh, and Upton. The rebels lost in killed the following general officers : General Rhodes, General Wharton, General Gordon, and General Ramseur.

"We have just sent them whirling through Winchester, and we are after them to-morrow. This army behaved splendidly. I am sending forward all the medical supplies, subsistence stores, and ambulances.

"JNO. D. STEVENSON, *Brigadier-General.*

"EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

“WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, }  
 “Monday, September 20, 1864—7 P. M. }

“TO MAJOR-GENERAL DIX, *New York* :

“The following is the latest intelligence received from General Sheridan :

“HARPER’S FERRY, VA., *Monday, Sept. 20, 1864—8 P. M.*

“HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War* :

“The body of General Russell has arrived. As soon as it is embalmed, it will be forwarded to New York. General McIntosh, with his leg amputated, has just come in, and is in good spirits.

“Several officers from the front report the number of prisoners in excess of three thousand.

“The number of battle-flags captured was fifteen, instead of nine.

“All concur that it was a complete rout. Our cavalry started in pursuit at daylight this morning. Sheridan, when last heard from, was at Kearnstown. I sent forward this morning ample medical supplies. Full subsistence for the entire army goes forward. If you do not hear from me often, it will be because of the distance we are from the scene of action, and because I only send you such information as I esteem reliable.

“JOHN B. RICHARDSON, *Brigadier-General*.

“The President has appointed General Sheridan a brigadier in the regular army, and assigned him to the permanent command of the middle military division.

“General Grant has ordered the army under his command to fire a salute of one hundred guns at seven o’clock to-morrow morning in honor of Sheridan’s great victory. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*.”

“WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, }  
 “September 21, 1864—10:15 A.M. }

“TO MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN A. DIX :

“This Department has just received the following telegram, announcing the continued pursuit of the rebels by General Sheridan. Cedar creek, which General Sheridan was crossing yesterday at three o’clock in the afternoon, is a short distance this side of Strasburg. He had pursued the rebels over thirty miles from the point where he first attacked them at daylight on Monday:

"HARPER'S FERRY, *September 21, 1864.*

"HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War:*

"Reliable news from the front states that our army was crossing Cedar creek yesterday at three P.M. There was no fighting.

"The following list of rebel generals killed and wounded is correct: Generals Rhodes, Ramseur, Gordon, Terry, Goodwin, Bradley Johnson, and Fitz Hugh Lee.

"From all I can learn, the number of prisoners will approximate to five thousand.

"The indications are that the rebels will not make a stand short of Staunton. They are evidently too much demoralized to make a fight.

"JOHN D. STEVENSON, *Brigadier-General.*

"General Grant transmits the following extract from the *Richmond Sentinel* of yesterday:—

"The *Richmond Sentinel* of the 20th, has the following:

"A slight ripple of excitement was produced here yesterday, by the report that a raiding party was advancing on Gordonsville, and were within a few miles of that place. The result of all our inquiries on this head is that this report originated in the fact that early yesterday a party of Yankee raiders, whose numbers are not known, visited Rapidan bridge, and after destroying it, proceeded to Liberty Mills, five or six miles above, which they also destroyed. From this latter place they are believed to have gone back to Culpepper.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

---

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., }  
"September 26, 1864—10:30 A. M. }

"Despatches from General Sheridan up to eleven o'clock on Saturday night, dated six miles south of New Market, have been received. He had driven the enemy from Mount Jackson, without being able to bring on an engagement. The enemy were moving rapidly, and he had no cavalry present to hold them.

"General Torbert had attacked Wickham's force at Luray, and captured a number of prisoners.

"General Sheridan found rebel hospitals in all the towns from Winchester to New Market, and was eighty miles

from Martinsburg. Twenty pieces of artillery were captured at Fisher's Hill, together with eleven hundred prisoners, a large amount of ammunition, caissons, limbers, &c., and a large quantity of intrenching tools, small arms, and *debris*. No list of the captured *material* has yet been received.

"The small towns through the valley have a great many of the rebel wounded.

"General Stevenson reports the arrival at Harper's Ferry of a train of our wounded, twenty captured guns, and eighty additional captured officers.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*."

---

"HARRISONBURG, VA., *September 29, 1864—7:30 P. M.*

"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT, *City Point* :

"In my last despatch, I informed you that I pressed Early so closely through New Market, at the same time sending cavalry around his flank, that he gave up the valley and took to the mountains, passing through Brown's gap. I kept up the pursuit to Port Republic, destroying seventy-five wagons, and four caissons. I sent General Torbert, who overtook me at Harrisonburg, to Staunton, with Wilson's division of cavalry, and one brigade of Merritt's. Torbert entered Staunton on the 26th, and destroyed a large quantity of rebel government property, harness, saddles, small arms, hard bread, flour, repair shops, &c.

"He then proceeded to Waynesboro', destroying the iron bridge over the south branch of the Shenandoah, seven miles of the track, the depot buildings, a government tannery, and a large amount of leather, flour, &c., at that place. He found the tunnel defended by infantry, and retired via Staunton.

"It is my impression that most of the troops which Early had left passed through the mountains to Charlottesville; that Kershaw's division came to his assistance, and I think, passed along the west base of the mountains to Waynesboro'.

"I am getting from twenty-five to forty prisoners daily, who come from the mountains on each side and deliver themselves up.



"From the most reliable accounts, Early's army was completely broken up, and is dispirited.

"Kershaw had not reached Richmond, but was somewhere in the vicinity of Gordonsville, when he received orders to rejoin Early.

"The destruction of the grain and forage from here to Staunton will be a terrible blow to them.

"All the grain, forage, etc., in the vicinity of Staunton, was retained for the use of Early's army. All in the lower part of the valley was shipped to Richmond for the use of Lee's army.

"The country from here to Staunton was abundantly supplied with forage, grain, etc.

"(Signed,) P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

---

"HARRISONBURG, VA., *September 26, 1864—7 P. M.*

"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT:

"I see it going the rounds of the papers that the nineteenth corps was late in coming to the battle of Winchester. I was entirely unconscious of this until I saw it in the papers. The statement was made by R. L. Shelby. I wish to say that it was incorrect, and that this correspondent was arrested by my order on a previous occasion for writing untruthful accounts.

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

On the 2d of October, 1864, the enemy advanced on our picket forces at Waynesboro', and, after a sharp skirmish, captured about fifty men of the third New Jersey. Some of these were subsequently retaken. The same day, our pickets at the bridge near Mount Crawford were attacked, and a heavy cannonade was kept up until the enemy desisted. On the 6th, Sheridan commenced to move back his command. The enemy promptly took the alarm, and on the 8th there was a brisk skirmishing between the enemy's cavalry under Rosser and ours under Merritt and Custer. Both parties had recourse, chiefly, however, to their artillery. The next day, the 9th, our forces being now near Fisher's Hill, Torbert was ordered to drive back the enemy from our rear. Merritt on the right, along the



Winchester turnpike, and Custer on the left, advanced at daylight and routed the enemy, capturing the spoils which General Sheridan sets forth in his despatches.

“WOODSTOCK, VA., *October 7, 1864—9 P. M.*

“LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT :

“I have the honor to report my command at this point to-night. I commenced moving back from Port Republic, Mount Crawford, Bridgewater and Harrisonburg, yesterday morning.

“The grain and forage in advance of these points, had previously been destroyed.

“In moving back to this point, the whole country, from the Blue Ridge to the North Mountain, has been made entirely untenable for a rebel army.

“I have destroyed over two thousand barns filled with wheat and hay and farming implements, over seventy mills filled with flour and wheat ; have driven in front of the army over four thousand head of stock, and have killed and issued to the troops, not less than three thousand sheep.

“This destruction embraces the Luray valley and Little Fort valley, as well as the main valley.

“A large number of horses have been obtained, a proper estimate of which I cannot now make.

“Lieutenant John R. Meigs, my engineer officer, was murdered beyond Harrisonburg, near Dayton. For this atrocious act, all the houses within an area of five miles were burned.

“Since I came into the valley from Harper's Ferry, every train, every small party, and every straggler, has been bushwhacked by the people, many of whom have protection passes from commanders who have been hitherto in that valley.

“The people here are getting sick of the war. Heretofore, they have had no reason to complain, because they have been living in great abundance.

“I have not been followed by the enemy to this point, with the exception of a small force of the rebel cavalry, that showed themselves some distance behind my rear-guard to-day.

“A party of one hundred of the eighth Ohio cavalry,

which I had stationed at the bridge over the North Shenandoah, near Mount Jackson, was attacked by McNeil, with seventeen men, while they were asleep, and the whole party dispersed or captured. I think they will all turn up. I learn that fifty-six of them had reached Winchester. McNeil was mortally wounded, and fell into our hands. This was fortunate, as he was the most daring and dangerous of all the bushwhackers in this section of the country.

P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

---

"STRASBURG, VA., *Midnight, October 9, 1864.*

"TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT, *City Point:*

"In coming back to this point, I was not followed up until late yesterday, when a large force of cavalry appeared in my rear. I then halted my command to offer battle by attacking the enemy. I became satisfied that it was only all the rebel cavalry of the valley, commanded by Rosser, and directed Torbert to attack at daylight this morning, and finish this 'Saviour of the Valley.' The attack was handsomely made. Custer, commanding the third cavalry division, charged on the back road, and Merritt, commanding the first cavalry division, on the Strasburg pike. Merritt captured five pieces of artillery. Custer captured six pieces of artillery, with caissons, battery forge, &c. The two divisions captured forty-seven wagons, ambulances, &c. Among the wagons captured, are the headquarters wagons of Rosser, Lomax, Wickham, and Colonel Pollard. The number of prisoners will be about three hundred and thirty.

"The enemy, after being charged by our gallant cavalry, were broken and ran. They were followed by our men on the jump twenty-six miles, through Mount Jackson and across the north fork of the Shenandoah. I deem it best to make this delay of one day here, and settle this new cavalry general.

"The eleven pieces of artillery captured to-day, make thirty-six pieces captured in the Shenandoah valley since the 19th of September. Some of the artillery was new, and never had been fired. The pieces were marked 'Tredegar Works.'

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

## CONGRATULATION TO THE CAVALRY.

"HEADQUARTERS CAVALRY CORPS, MIDDLE }  
 "MILITARY DIVISION, *October 11, 1864.* }

"GENERAL ORDERS No. 13.

"The chief of cavalry desires to congratulate the officers and men of the cavalry of the middle military division for their unparalleled successes since the beginning of the campaign in the valley of the Shenandoah.

"You have been called upon to endure many privations and hardships, and they have been borne with that heroic fortitude so necessary to insure to you the victories which have crowned your efforts.

"In the battle of the 19th of September you not alone routed the enemy's cavalry, but gallantly charged their infantry, broke their lines, and captured many hundred prisoners, nine colors, and three guns. This success, followed by fatiguing marches, and harassing skirmishes and reconnoissances with an ever vigilant foe, and crowned by your unprecedented achievements on the 9th of October, when, having broken the entire body of their cavalry, you chased their routed columns over twenty miles, capturing eleven pieces of artillery, two colors, many prisoners, and their entire train, is a record which, by the blessing of God, has contributed much to the renown of our arms and the success of our cause.

"By command of *Brevet Major-General TORBERT.*

"WM. RUSSELL, JR., *Major and A. A. G.*"

"HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION, }  
*"October 14, 1864.* }

"The following has been received, and is published for the information of the army :

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, *October 12—8 P. M.*

"MAJOR-GENERAL SHERIDAN :

"The Department tenders its thanks to you, and through you to Major-General Torbert, Generals Merritt and Custer, and the officers and soldiers under their command, for the brilliant victories on last Sunday by their gallantry over the rebel cavalry in the Shenandoah valley. Under gallant leaders your cavalry has become the efficient arm in this country that it has proved in other

countries, and is winning by its exploits the admiration of the country and government.

“EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*.

“*By command of* Major-General SHERIDAN.

“C. KINGSBURY, JR., *Assistant Adjutant-General*.”

---

“HEADQUARTERS CAVALRY MIDDLE DIVISION, }  
“October 14, 1864. }

“This despatch will be read at once at the head of every regiment in this command.

“*By command of* Major-General TORBERT.

“WM. RUSSELL, JR., *Assistant Adjutant-General*.”

### BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK.

Soon after midnight of Tuesday, August 18th, Early, having arranged his troops unperceived at Fisher's Hill, just beyond Strasburg, moved forward to the attack. The sharp rattle of musketry on the right, near the Middle road, before daylight, made the camp aware that our cavalry pickets were engaged with the enemy's skirmishers. But the firing died away, the movement in that quarter being in fact only a feint, and being regarded, also, as a demonstration like the previous one against Custer's pickets. The real attack was to fall upon our left. Kershaw's division was in Early's advance. Marching southeasterly from Strasburg a short distance along the Manassas gap railroad, Kershaw, with a selected column, then turned northerly again on the small road which crosses the North Fork by a ford about a mile to the east of the junction of Cedar creek with that river. Before dawn of Wednesday, the 19th, he was across the ford and marching past the left flank of Crook's corps, directly in the latter's rear, the whole manœuvre being accomplished in the chilly and foggy morning without the knowledge of our army. Meanwhile, the rest of Early's command had marched straight down the turnpike from Strasburg to Cedar creek, with equal silence and celerity,

and, like the flanking column, without alarming our pickets or officers of the day.

His positions being gained, close upon our picket line, the enemy, just before daybreak, rushed to the attack. So well protected was this flank with earthworks carrying artillery, that little fear had been entertained for it. But the enemy's noiseless advance and successful surprise counterbalanced the strength of the defences. Advancing in columns of regiments, he swept in upon Crook's picket line, and captured the greater part of it. Before the noise of the skirmishing had aroused the camp from its slumbers, the enemy's flanking column was fairly within the intrenchments of the eighth corps, and was capturing prisoners in large numbers, amongst his captures being the second battalion fifth New York heavy artillery, which was on the picket line. Once inside the camp, the enemy rushed to seize the batteries, and succeeded in cutting off and capturing many pieces of artillery, before the latter could exchange a shot. The left division of Crook's corps was now thoroughly broken up, and Kitching's provisional division of heavy New York artillery, which lay in Crook's rear, suffered a similar calamity. General Crook and Colonel Kitching endeavored to rally their commands; but the bewilderment of the troops in the unexpected attack, the large force of the enemy, and his success in turning our flank unperceived, showed that he could not be checked at this point.

Meanwhile, also, Early had emerged from behind the hills west of Cedar creek, where he lay concealed, and simultaneously with the attack in flank, rushed across the creek at the ford, and drove back Thorburn's division, which lay on the right of Crook's line, in front of the ford and against the turnpike. This combined movement sufficed to complete the disaster. The entire corps was routed, and the left flank of the army turned. Many of



the regiments, however, were rallied, and the whole command falling back to the turnpike, was there got into line again as rapidly as possible, after the loss of many prisoners. But the enemy had now got all his artillery in position on the high ridges on the westerly bank of the creek, and, with accurate range, was pouring shot and shell in great profusion into both the eighth and nineteenth corps. On this side of the creek, also, he continued his rapid advance, elated at his success, and delivered a constant and murderous musketry fire into our recoiling line as he advanced. He had soon gained and passed the turnpike, in his march along our line, and in heavy force, charged the batteries of the nineteenth corps. His impetuous attack was only too successful, and the left of the nineteenth corps also gave way, leaving a part of its artillery in his hands. Under this rapid musketry fire of the enemy in his vigorous advance, joined with his effective artillery from the opposite banks of the creek, and the fire from our own batteries which he had turned against us, our left and centre were thrown into confusion. Many prisoners were captured, and many casualties occurred in our ranks from his hot fire. All the trains were therefore started in haste along the turnpike to Winchester, and escaping capture, arrived there in safety.

It was now broad day, and it appeared that our disasters had only begun. For the enemy, having succeeded in rolling up the left of the line, and in severing Powell's cavalry division on the extreme left from the rest of the army, was now forcing back the entire centre, and occupying the intrenchments of the nineteenth corps as he had those of the eighth. He had captured a large part of our artillery also—eighteen pieces thus far—and not only deprived us of these means of checking his advance, but, to our double calamity, turned them on our columns, materially precipitating the retreat. Nearly all of his



force was on this side of the creek, and a part of the flanking column, turning off from the pursuit of the eighteenth corps, found itself in the rear of Grover's second division of the nineteenth corps, which formed Emory's left, and held the right or northerly side of the turnpike. Hasty dispositions toward a change of front were made, so as to hold the pike, but they were of no avail. Emory was flanked, in his turn, and gave away to the rear. The sixth corps had been already ordered over from its position on the right, and quickly executed a change of front, which brought it at right angles to its former direction. Steadily holding this new line, the corps was soon engaged in desperate conflict, and, by its gallantry, served to check the enemy's impetuous rush. But, after all, it only availed to cover the general retreat, which was now ordered. The enemy was creeping up along the pike, and already approached Middletown. Great efforts were made to get away the trains of the two left corps, and most of those of the nineteenth were saved. Most of the ambulance train of the eighth corps was captured during the first hour of the engagement. In the retreat, and in the effort to cover our trains, our troops suffered severely from the fire of the enemy, who pursued closely and with great vigor. The enemy now increased both his artillery and musketry fire to its utmost capacity, till the roar and carnage became terrific. He still pressed our left flank, as if determined to drive us away from the turnpike, that he might seize our trains, and insert himself between us and Winchester. His projects were aided somewhat by the necessity forced upon us to spend much time in manœuvring to reform the line, while he employed himself only in advancing and pouring in his destructive fire. As he pressed our left so much more hotly than the right, the cavalry divisions of Merritt and Custer, were sent across thither from the right, and now a severe contest

took place near Middletown, in the thickly wooded and rough country in which our left had found itself.

It was now about nine o'clock, and our troops having got into line-of-battle again, were, for the first time, making desperate efforts to check the enemy. The eighth corps on the left, and the sixth in the centre, were receiving the brunt of the fierce onset. Merritt and Custer had also taken part in the thick of the battle. Both sides were using artillery as well as musketry, but the enemy brought to bear the greater weight of metal, having reinforced their own batteries with our captured pieces. As the enemy's troops closed in on our own, it was clear that the momentum he had acquired was swinging him again past our flank. The flanking column of the enemy pressed severely upon Thorburn's division and other parts of Crook's corps, and once more forced it back. The sixth corps held its ground well, but the whole line was giving away, and the enemy gained Middletown. He continued to press us back toward Stephensburg or Newtown, which lies next below Middletown, on the turnpike, and about five miles distant therefrom. His artillery was served with accuracy from the heights north of Middletown, which we had just vacated. Our principal aim henceforth was to successfully cover our trains and to draw away the army with as little loss as possible to Newtown, when another stand might be made, for General Wright had by no means despaired of the day.

#### ARRIVAL OF GENERAL SHERIDAN—THE TIDE TURNED.

At this time, about half-past ten o'clock, Sheridan rode upon the field from Winchester, where news of the battle had reached him. He had come in at great speed, being well assured by the sight that met him on the road that his presence was needed at the earliest moment.

His arrival created great enthusiasm amongst both officers and men, to whom, in the general gloom, this was a ray of hope. He rode along the ranks, and was received everywhere with cheers. A temporary pause in the enemy's pursuit, and our own withdrawal from his fire, facilitated greatly the preparations to resist any further advance. These were promptly undertaken, just south of Newtown, between the latter point and Middletown. The line was left as Wright had formed it, except that one cavalry division, Custer's, was sent across to cover the right flank, where it was before the battle.

The lull in the fierce fighting which had commenced soon after our retreat to Newtown and Sheridan's opportune arrival, soon after noon came to an end. The enemy, having got his artillery up into range of our new position, now opened it with new vigor. About one o'clock, his troops were well in hand again, and once more came up on the charge. But this time he was doomed to disappointment. Our lines were ready, and, after a long and desperate struggle, repulsed him handsomely, and even followed him back for a short distance. General Bidwell was killed and General Grover wounded, in this renewal of the heavy engagement. From two o'clock till three there was no advance of importance on either side. Incessant cannonading and the rattle of musketry filled up the hour; but all attempts of the enemy to force us back were fruitless.

About three o'clock, Sheridan determined to make a grand effort to throw the enemy out of Middletown, which, up to that time, he held, and once more to regain our camp at Cedar creek. The sixth corps was drawn up in the centre, along the pike, with Getty's second division in advance. The other divisions supported. The eighth corps was re-formed on the left of the sixth, and the nineteenth came up on its right, under cover of the woods.

Merritt's first cavalry division was thrown out on the left flank, with Lowell's brigade in advance, and Deven following closely. Custer was on the right flank. Between three and four o'clock, Getty dashed forward on the charge, and the remainder of the line followed. A tremendous fire of artillery and musketry greeted our troops as they burst out of the woods. For a time it seemed impossible to withstand it. Our lines once surged back, broken, but were again re-formed, and, while such of our own batteries as remained, answered the enemy with vigor and effect, the gallant troops again pressed on. Despite determined and bloody resistance, they carried the town, and drove the discomfited enemy through it. This was the crisis of the day, and from that moment victory was ours. The enemy at once began his retreat, and it was only a question how far our men would have strength enough to pursue him, and what spoil he would leave in our hands. In this last charge fell the gallant Colonel Lowell, who had greatly distinguished himself during this Shenandoah campaign. His brigade also behaved very handsomely during the present battle.

The sixth and nineteenth corps and the cavalry now pressed the enemy from Middletown to Cedar creek. In his haste he threw away guns, haversacks, clothing, and other *débris* of a routed army. No time was given him to pause. The infantry were thrown rapidly into column for the pursuit, and the cavalry charged across the open fields. At Cedar creek the enemy attempted at last to hold us in check, and planted his batteries on the opposite banks, to hold the bridge and fords. But our forces pressed on, carried the fords and bridge, and drove him from the creek through Strasburg to Fisher's Hill. The cavalry distinguished itself in getting across the creek under fire. The briskness of the pursuit caused the enemy to abandon large quantities of cannon, caissons,

and wagons, and threw his whole rear into confusion. In fact our troops had now a fair offset for their own defeat in the morning, and the enemy was put to flight in quite as much rapidity and disorganization as he had visited upon us at daybreak, and with much greater loss of material. The desperately resisted but successful charge at Middletown was, in fact, the turning point of the day. The enemy was put to flight, and all that was required was to pursue, and pick up prisoners and spoils. The hard fighting was over, and the loss which followed fell upon the enemy. The cavalry proved now of great assistance, and the enemy, in his haste to get away, abandoned all the cannon he had captured and much of his own. Our camp equipage fell into our hands again, and in fact, at each step the cavalry found cannon, caissons, small arms, or other material, and prisoners ready to be captured without a struggle.

From the arrival of Sheridan and the turn of the tide, we gained back nearly all that had been lost—except the prisoners and the small amount destroyed or carried off by the enemy—and captured still more than we had lost. The most accurate estimate gives our total captures and re-captures as follows:—twelve hundred men, sixty-four officers, forty-eight cannon, forty caissons, three battery wagons, three hundred and ninety-eight horses and mules, with harness, sixty-five ambulances, fifty wagons, fifteen thousand rounds of artillery ammunition, fifteen hundred and eighty small arms, many medical stores of the enemy, besides our own, ten battle flags, and some smaller captures of stores. One of the enemy's papers, admitting the defeat, says:

“All of the camp equipage captured on the creek in the morning was retaken by the enemy, and at Strasburg the captured artillery becoming, by the demoralization of the drivers, mixed up in the street with some ten or twelve



pieces of our own, the whole of it was abandoned. The prisoners we had taken, the most useless and unacceptable of our captures, were alone left to us as trophies of the morning. By night our army was in New Market, worn with fatigue, and perplexed and mortified with the results of the day's operation, but growing cheerful by degrees, and sanguine of 'better luck the next time.' Our loss in men was not heavy. In this respect there is some consolation in knowing that the enemy suffered by far the heavier. In the morning's operations the slaughter of the enemy is represented as having been very great."

A part of our infantry reached Strasburg, but the main army bivouacked in the old camp along Cedar creek. The cavalry dashed through Strasburg to Fisher's Hill, and there stopped the victorious march. Wright having fallen, we pursued only three or four miles beyond the old camp ground.

It was on the decisive and glorious results of this hard-earned victory, that the following spirited poem, was produced by Mr. Thomas Buchanan Read :

### SHERIDAN'S RIDE.

BY THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

Up from the South at break of day,  
Bringing from Winchester fresh dismay,  
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,  
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,  
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,  
Telling the battle was on once more,  
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war  
Thundered along the horizon's bar ;  
And louder yet into Winchester rolled  
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,  
Making the blood of the listener cold,



As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,  
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,  
A good, broad highway leading down ;  
And there, through the flush of the morning light,  
A steed, as black as the steeds of night  
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,  
As if he knew the terrible need ;  
He stretched away with his utmost speed ;  
Hills rose and fell, but his heart was gay,  
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering South,  
The dust, like the smoke from the cannon's mouth ;  
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,  
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.  
The heart of the steed and the heart of the master  
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,  
Impatient to be where the battle-field calls ;  
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,  
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet, the road  
Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,  
And the landscape sped away behind  
Like an ocean flying before the wind ;  
And the steed, like a bark fed with furnace ire,  
Swept on, with his wild eyes full of fire.  
But lo ! he is nearing his heart's desire ;  
He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,  
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the General saw were the groups  
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops ;—  
What was done—what to do—a glance told him both ;  
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,

He dashed down the line 'mid a storm of huzzas,  
 And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because  
 The sight of its master compelled it to pause.  
 With foam and with dust the black charger was gray ;  
 By the flash of his eye, and his red nostril's play,  
 He seemed to the whole great army to say :  
 " I have brought you Sheridan all the way  
 From Winchester, down to save the day !"

Hurrah, hurrah for Sheridan !  
 Hurrah, hurrah for horse and man !  
 And when their statues are placed on high,  
 Under the dome of the Union sky,  
 The American Soldiers' Temple of Fame,  
 There with the glorious General's name,  
 Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,  
 " Here is the steed that saved the day,  
 By carrying Sheridan into the fight,  
 From Winchester—twenty miles away !"\*

A characteristic despatch from General Sheridan was issued from the War Department:

" CEDAR CREEK, VA., }

" *Friday, Oct. 21, 1864—4 P. M.* }

" LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT, *City Point, Va.*

" I pursued the routed force of the enemy nearly to Mount Jackson, which point he reached during the night of the 19th and 20th, without an organized regiment of his army. From the accounts of our prisoners who have escaped, and citizens, the rout was complete. About two thousand of the enemy broke and made their way down through the mountains on the left.

" Fourteen miles on the line of retreat, the road and country were covered with small arms thrown away by the flying rebels, and other *débris*. Forty-eight pieces of

---

\* As a fitting compliment to the author of this magnificent lyric, General SHERIDAN has named " the black charger" READ.

captured artillery are now at my headquarters. I think that no less than three hundred wagons and ambulances were either captured or destroyed. The accident of the morning turned to our advantage as much as though the whole movement had been planned. The only regret I have, is the capture in early morning of from eight hundred to one thousand men.

"I am now sending to the War Department ten battle flags. The loss of artillery in the morning, was seven from Crook, eleven from Emory, six from Wright. From all that I can learn, I think that Early's reinforcements were not less than sixteen thousand men.

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

The *Army and Navy Journal*, commenting on the position of things at this time, and the course of General Sheridan, adds :

The recent withdrawal of our army to Kernstown, five miles south of Winchester, produced a corresponding advance of Early to Strasburg, and thence across the famous Cedar creek. Without waiting, however, to try the test of a battle, Early moved back again to Fisher's Hill. He may possibly use this strong position as a base for future operations. But even could he advance to Winchester, and take that place, he would find it a meagre position for winter quarters, since all the country between him and his railroad base is stripped and desolate. His only hope would be to recover lost prestige by a single coup—an attempt to which Sheridan would put insuperable objections.

The change in the position of the armies, however, was accompanied by spirited engagements for a day or two ; then hostilities subsided into those guerrilla operations which constantly disturb the quiet of the valley. Early, it is said, had heard that Sheridan was to detach, temporarily or permanently, a corps from his command. The retrograde movement from Cedar Creek gave additional

color to this idea. The enemy, therefore, sent a part of his cavalry to Wordensville, to threaten our right and rear, and to pillage, also, such supplies as could be found. On the 11th, he moved part of his forces briskly after Sheridan, whose march to Kernstown we have already described. On the left was Rosser's cavalry division, already thrown out in that direction, and on the right was Lomax's division, which marched to Front Royal, while Kershaw's infantry division kept the Winchester turnpike, and arrived at night at Newton, confronting Sheridan's position at the next point, Kernstown. Some reconnoissances, attended with unimportant skirmishes, were made the same night by the enemy's cavalry.

The next day, Saturday, the 12th, our entire cavalry force moved out to reconnoitre the enemy's new position. Merritt's division took the turnpike, with Custer's on his right, and Powell's on his left, the latter striking off on the road to Front Royal. Powell soon after noon was beyond the Opequan, holding the pike. About the middle of the afternoon, he sent forward one brigade, which encountered Lomax near the small village of Ninevah, and skirmished with him. A second brigade was then sent forward, and the first drawn into line. The enemy at once rushed forward on a determined charge, but was met and checked by our men, who advanced in turn, and after a brisk encounter drove him, and pursued him a long distance toward Port Royal. In this affair we captured two cannon and caissons, two colors, over one hundred and fifty prisoners, including twenty officers, and some horses. Several of Early's officers also, including Lieutenant-Colonel Marshall, were killed. Our total loss was less than thirty, while the enemy's was probably greater. The enemy's division consisted of about ten regiments.

On the right, Custer was moving down the Middle road, and the one between that and the turnpike, while Merritt

took the turnpike. Custer skirmished briskly all day, moving slowly but steadily back to Cedar creek. Our losses were in Custer's division, about fifty in killed and wounded, including Colonel Hull, killed. The division captured twenty or thirty prisoners, and lost from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and fifty. Merritt had a similar experience of constant skirmishing, with a loss of about forty men killed and wounded. He did not advance far, however, finding Kershaw's division in his front, and superior to his own. In a word, therefore, our cavalry had pressed the enemy, without forcing a general engagement. At night it retired toward its old position, having completed the reconnoissance. It is probable that the enemy's cavalry was also engaged in reconnoitering when ours encountered it. That night the enemy retired across Cedar creek, and carried his whole army back to Fisher's Hill, as our cavalry discovered on the following morning. The enemy's movement seems to have been a reconnoissance, and his withdrawal commenced on the afternoon of the 12th, during the cavalry skirmishing. Our cavalry have since reconnoitered to Strasburg, ascertaining that the enemy's main force is either at New Market again, or, at all events, not nearer us than Fisher's Hill. His entire army did not equal fifteen thousand men, and it had received no reinforcements, except a few poorly equipped recruits. Our loss in the cavalry corps was about two hundred and fifty men, of which the majority were prisoners. The enemy's report is that Rosser drove our forces back, inflicting a greater loss than he suffered, and capturing two hundred prisoners. In effect, as we have said, the enemy's losses were slightly heavier than ours, and he was driven from his ground, leaving two cannon and some wagons behind him.

Since Early's withdrawal, our cavalry have held the country to Cedar creek, and have reconnoitered beyond



the creek, meeting and skirmishing with the enemy's cavalry. There have been many guerrilla attacks also in our rear, between Winchester and Martinsburg. On the 16th, Sergeant Schaffner and fifteen men were attacked by Montgomery's company of Mosby's men, near the Opequan. Schaffner was killed, six of his men killed and wounded, and the rest captured; but afterwards recaptured by the Fifteenth Michigan. The enemy reports that on the 10th Kinchelo's partisan rangers wounded and captured several of our cavalry scouts. On the 17th, a detachment of Powell's division found on reconnoitering, that Lomax was between Milford and Luray. A few prisoners were captured by us the same day, among them Captain Hobson. On the Martinsburgh turnpike, on the 15th, several of our soldiers were killed by guerrillas; and on the next day twenty-five of our cavalrymen were surprised by guerrillas, two killed, two wounded, and the rest captured. Similar encounters take place frequently in the valley, where Mosby's men have large liberty. The enemy reports that McNeil captured twenty-three of our men on the 1st inst., in Hampshire county—two or three men also being killed and wounded in the encounter on each side. On the 18th, it is reported Captain Blazear with about sixty men, was defeated by guerrillas, and most of his men captured. The fact that a few guerrillas crossed the Potomac caused the formation of militia companies in some Pennsylvania border towns.

It was at Fisher's Hill that Sheridan paused in his first advance up the valley, and from which he turned back to Harper's Ferry. But then Early had not been defeated, and was demonstrative and aggressive. Had Early been able to withdraw to Fisher's Hill at the outset, and there fight the battle he fought at Winchester, he might have suffered less himself, and inflicted a severer blow on his



adversary. But even Fisher's Hill failed to protect him, exhausted and shattered by the disaster at Winchester. Nor is Fisher's Hill the formidable position it at first appears. Almost impregnable to assault, it yet can be easily turned. Sheridan found in his second experiment that he could flank it, especially when his troops were flushed with success.

From Fisher's Hill Early found his way to Brown's gap, and there held a strong and almost impregnable position. Intrenchments were thrown up, and every thing prepared for a determined stand. At Brown's gap Early enjoyed unusual facilities for defence. It is situated in the Blue Ridge. North of it are Swift Run and Semon's gaps; south of it, Rockfish gap and Jaman's gaps. All of these are so near together that Early easily held them under his control, posting his main force at Brown's gap, and throwing his flanks out as far as Rockfish gap and Swift Run gap. These are the gateways to Gordonsville and Charlottesville from Staunton and Harrisonburg. He held them firmly, and was disposed not to surrender them without a decisive battle. Sheridan, following him quickly up the valley, halted at Harrisonburg, and threw his cavalry out to Cross Keys and Port Republic. The latter attempted twice or thrice to carry the gap; or, rather, reconnoitered it in force, to discover its strength. They were handled so roughly by Early's troops that it was very evident the enemy had recovered his equilibrium again, and was disposed to contest every rod of the way. It was also discovered that Early was very strongly posted in the gap.

Early now threw his own cavalry out in front of his position, and several times assumed the offensive, once barely missing success in flanking Powell's division, and accelerating our withdrawal from Port Republic to Cross Keys.

It was now evident, however, that for Sheridan a choice of two things remained—either to prosecute his advance toward Lynchburg, or to retire down the valley.

It may be asked why Sheridan did not choose the other alternative, and why, not contenting himself with severely defeating Early in a series of pitched battles, he did not make further progress up the valley. The reason may be found probably in his definite instructions from General Grant, although, of course, the country does not yet know officially what those instructions were. It must be confessed, also, that Sheridan found himself in a position where it would have been rather hazardous to go ahead. He had but two paths before him—one straight up the valley, in order to strike Lynchburg in that way. In that case he would probably have seized first Staunton, and then Lexington, and then crossing the Blue Ridge through Irish Creek gap, or Robertson's gap, he would have been quickly before Lynchburg. Or, he might have marched easterly through one of the gaps lying directly in his front, and deserting the Shenandoah valley, have continued the campaign east of the Blue Ridge. In favor of this latter scheme was one obvious advantage. He would threaten simultaneously several important points—Orange Court House, Gordonsville, Charlottesville, and Lynchburg. The latter, of course, is the most important. But to seize Gordonsville, the base of so many of Lee's operations, and Orange Court House, in front of which this grand Virginia campaign so magnificently opened, to capture the enemy's supplies and materials there, and once more strike and destroy the Virginia Central road, was no mean undertaking.

To each of these schemes there were obstacles. The first would obviously leave Early directly on our flank, intact and alert. Sheridan would not have passed above Staunton before his opponent, descending from his eyrie

at Brown's gap, would have struck his rear, ruined his communications, and forced a sudden retreat. The objection to the plan was the direct presence of Early in our front. He also had seen the advantage of crossing the Blue Ridge toward Gordonsville and Charlottesville. He therefore disposed himself strongly to resist us. A few sharp encounters showed that his reported weakness had been exaggerated; that he had recovered from his severe defeats, and was daily getting reinforcements. It being obvious, therefore, that no more was to be gained in the region of Cross Keys and Port Republic, it obviously remained only to fall back down the valley to some point which could be easily and firmly held. The desperate and audacious raids of guerrilla bands between Strasburg and the Potomac, under the lead of the ubiquitous Mosby, of White, and other partisan chieftains, made this change of position still more desirable. Finally, Sheridan's winter supplies were on the way. It was necessary to fall back and meet them, lest they should be captured. The great victory of Cedar creek has not only justified the strategy of Sheridan in retreating, but has once more convicted the enemy of rashness, and added to the growing laurels of the Union general.

#### CONGRATULATORY ORDER.

"HEADQUARTERS SECOND BRIGADE, FIRST CAV. DIV., }  
"MIDDLE MILITARY DIV., Nov. 6, 1864. }

"SOLDIERS:—The Brevet Brigadier-General Commanding feels that he should not allow the present opportunity to pass without referring to and recalling the operations of his brigade during the late engagements.

"Rapidly transferred from the army of the Potomac to the Shenandoah valley, you, on the second day's march, engaged a brigade of mounted infantry, and in one hour drove them from two strong positions in utter rout. Again, at Front Royal, Smithfield, Kearneysville and Shepherds-town, your sturdy arms and keen sabres on each occasion hurled back the serried masses of the foe. At the battle

of Opequan, after charging and routing a superior force of the enemy's cavalry, in your front, you whirled like a thunderbolt on the left of his infantry lines, and rode them down in the face of a withering fire, in two successive charges, capturing over five hundred prisoners and five battle flags.

"When detached from the division, and in advance during the long pursuit of Early's army from Fisher's Hill to Port Republic, your gallantry and daring while pressing the enemy called forth the highest praise. In the action of the 9th of October, taking the advance near Edinburg, you drove Lomax's division 'whirling' through Mount Jackson and across the Shenandoah, capturing his last gun and his train.

"On the memorable 19th of October the crowning glory was reserved for you of pursuing the enemy and reaping the fruits of that brilliant victory. After sturdily fighting from early morn with the gallant old division to which you are attached, in its successful efforts to check and finally drive the enemy's right, you dashed across the bridge over Cedar creek under a heavy fire, charging and completely smashing the enemy's rear guard. Darkness did not relax your efforts, but on you pushed, capturing guns, trains and prisoners, until, at near midnight, you had reached Fisher's Hill, eight miles from the battle-field.

"At early dawn you charged and drove the enemy's cavalry from the hill and pushed on to Woodstock after the fast flying foe, who could not again be overtaken.

"Twenty-two of the forty-three guns captured by the cavalry, fifty-nine wagons and ambulances, over four hundred prisoners (including a number of officers,) and two battle-flags, were the trophies of your success.

"You have captured, during this short campaign, twenty-four guns, nine battle-flags in action, and over one thousand prisoners.

"This brilliant success has not been effected without severe loss. One-third of your number, including forty officers, have been killed or wounded. They have fallen nobly at their post of duty.

"Praise from me is superfluous. The record of your deeds is sufficient. You have done your duty, and the brigade has maintained its old reputation.

"THOMAS C. DEVEN, *Brevet Brigadier-General.*"

The grateful feeling of the country toward General Sheridan and his brave command, is implied in the following brief notes :

"DEAR SIR:—Your telegram advising me of the shipment of six thousand turkeys for the thanksgiving dinner of this army is received. Permit me in behalf of the soldiers to thank the good people of New York and the country for their kindness, and to assure them that for the occasion a no more acceptable present could have been made. Orders have been issued for the equal distribution on arrival. P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

---

"HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION, }  
 "IN THE FIELD, Nov. 13, 1864. }

"J. FOSTER JENKINS, *General Secretary United States Sanitary Commission* :

"DEAR SIR:—Yours of October 31, advising me of my having been elected an associate member of the United States Sanitary Commission, is received. I have the honor to thank you for the compliment paid me, and in behalf of the sick and wounded of this army to acknowledge the many benefits derived from your charitable association.

"I am, sir, yours, truly,

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

### THE DEVASTATION OF THE VALLEY.

Some evidence of the terror struck to the rebels by these victories of Sheridan, will be found in the following extract from one of the journals of the rebel capital—the Richmond *Whig* of October 15, 1864 :

"Sheridan reports to Grant that in moving down the valley to Woodstock, he has burned over two thousand barns filled with wheat, hay, and farming implements, and over seventy mills filled with flour and wheat. This was done by order of Grant himself, commander of all the Yankee armies. It is only the execution of part of the order to destroy every thing in the valley that will sustain life. The fell work is still going on. Now, it is an idle



waste of words to denounce this sort of war. We have simply to regard it as a practical matter, and ask ourselves how it is to be met. There is one effectual way, and only one we know of, to arrest and prevent this and every other sort of atrocity—and that is, to burn one of the chief cities of the enemy, say Boston, Philadelphia, or Cincinnati, and let its fate hang over the others as a warning of what may be done and will be done to them if the present system of war on the part of the enemy is continued. If we are asked how such a thing can be done, we answer nothing would be easier. A million of dollars would lay the proudest city of the enemy in ashes. The men to execute the work are already there. There would be no difficulty in finding there, here, or in Canada, suitable persons to take charge of the enterprise, and arrange its details. Twenty men, with plans all preconcerted, and means provided, selecting some dry, windy night, might fire Boston in a hundred places, and wrap it in flames from centre to suburbs. They might retaliate on Richmond, Charleston, etc. Let them do so if they dare. It is a game at which we can beat them. New York is worth twenty Richmonds. They have a dozen towns to our one, and in their towns is centered nearly all their wealth. It would not be immoral and barbarous. It is not immoral or barbarous to defend yourself by any means or with any weapon the enemy may employ for your destruction. They choose to substitute the torch for the sword. We may so use their own weapon as to make them repent, literally in sackcloth and ashes, that they ever adopted it. If the Executive is not ready for this, we commend the matter to the secret deliberation of the Congress about to meet."

#### SHERIDAN AS A GUN TAKER.

Alluding to his brilliant success in capturing cannons from the enemy, the *Army and Navy Journal* of November 26, 1864, says :



“General Sheridan seems inclined to emulate, in his Shenandoah campaign, the reputation of General Grant, as the great *gun-taker* of the war. Before the present campaign, the Lieutenant-General had got well into the hundreds in the number of his captured cannon—exactly how far we forgot, but the figure approached half a thousand. Official reports from the cavalry corps of the Shenandoah army, have lately set forth the number of cannon captured from the unhappy Early,—though, by the way, we must caution some readers not to be verdant enough to suppose that the cavalry divisions have charged all the batteries, or done all the bloody fighting, or suffered all the losses in the campaign, merely because they share with each other the captures of flags and cannon. The infantry must have a tithe of praise too, though the horsemen were the swiftest in picking up the spoils, which, at the end of a hard fight, the ruined enemy dropped in his flight. At all events it is clear that Sheridan now counts his captured artillery with three figures, and, like Grant, is among ‘the hundreds.’ What singular magnet he possesses for attracting Early’s ordnance must be a perpetual mystery to the Tredegar workmen, whose main occupation of late, seems to be turning out guns for him to lose. A press correspondent from the valley humorously relates that new batteries have lately been sent to Early from Richmond, and that they came marked ‘Lieutenant-General Early,’ whereupon some malicious wag wrote over this direction the words, ‘Major-General Philip Sheridan, care of Uncle Sam.’”

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE GREAT VIRGINIA RAID.

DURING the first week in December, 1864, Merritt's (first) cavalry division crossed the Blue Ridge, and made a grand raid through the upper parts of Loudon and Fauquier counties, which were the chief haunts of Mosby and his men. Every thing was laid waste, barns, houses,

farms and mills; many cattle were captured, and others slaughtered and burned. Most of the people were sympathizers with Mosby, so that the damage chiefly fell upon the enemy. The raid was in accordance with the policy initiated by Grant and Sheridan, and its results, officially reported, are as follows:

## PROPERTY CAPTURED.

	1st Brigade.	2d Brigade.	Res. Brigade.	Total.
Horses.....	147	235	86	388
Mules .....	4	4	—	8
Cattle.....	2,563	2,483	474	5,520
Sheep.....	3,607	2,130	100	5,837
Swine.....	1,033	110	—	1,141

## PROPERTY DESTROYED.

Barns... ..	474	464	230	1,168
Mills.....	19	22	8	49
Factories.....	—	2	—	2
Distilleries.....	1	4	1	6
Tons of hay.....	—	17,620	10,000	27,620
Bushels of wheat....	—	26,500	25,000	51,500
Bushels of corn.....	5,400	57,500	—	62,900
Bushels of oats.....	—	2,000	—	2,002
Haystacks.....	990	131	—	1,121
Wheatstacks .....	—	57	—	57
Tanneries. ....	1	—	—	1
Stacks of grain.....	104	—	—	104

Estimated value of property destroyed and captured by  
 first brigade, Colonel Stagg..... \$857,716  
 Second brigade, General Deven..... 1,239,520  
 Reserve brigade..... 411,520

Total.....\$2,508,756

Perhaps the statement of a rebel commissioner of the revenue in Shenandoah county, made about the same time, will give a clearer idea of Sheridan's previous cavalry operations in that county alone. He says:

"I will now try to give you some idea of the damage done in part of this county by the Yankees in the way of

burning of barns, mills, &c. I have been over nearly the whole of my district, comprising all the upper end of the county, from Narrow Passage creek to the Rockingham county line, and I find there have been burned by Sheridan's army two hundred and fifteen barns, eighteen dwellings, eleven grist mills, nine water sawmills, two steam sawmills, one furnace, two forges, one fulling mill, one carding machine, besides a number of smaller buildings, such as stables, &c. The quantity of grain destroyed is immense. I cannot give you any idea of the amount of grain, hay, fodder, &c., destroyed, but the quantity is very large."

On Monday, the 18th, an expedition, consisting of Merritt's (first) and Powell's (second) cavalry divisions, the former temporarily under Deven, and the whole under Torbert, left the camp at Winchester. The expedition had been carefully prepared for some days, and the troops took six days' rations and one day's forage. No artillery was carried, and an unusually short train, considering that it was a cavalry raid. Deven, in advance, was off at daylight, and the expedition marched briskly, though in a heavy rain-storm. At noon, the north fork of the Shenandoah was reached and forded, and Front Royal passed; the column bivouacked at Chester gap, after a march of twenty-five miles. A cold and heavy gale during the night blew up a frost. But the troops started at daylight again, on the 19th, and for the first part of the march were ordered to ride two miles and walk one, till the sun appeared to warm the atmosphere. A detachment under Captain Faron, of the twenty-first New York, scouting for that purpose, overtook and captured a herd of cattle, which was under charge of the enemy's soldiers, the guard escaping. Several prisoners were picked up here and there during the day. The troops marched that day through Sperryville. The third day, the 20th, opened with hail and rain. The troops were hurried forward,

however, and reaching Creighsville, found McCausland's camp-fires there still burning. Powell encamped there, Deven keeping on to Madison Court House, six miles distant. At the latter point, Stagg's Michigan brigade, in Deven's advance, encountered the enemy's pickets, and drove them back, in a sharp skirmish, through the town.

The enemy's loss was thirteen, including a major and captain, the former killed. Ours was still less. On the morning of Wednesday, the 21st, which was clear and cold, Powell, in advance, started from Madison Court House. Soon after, Tibbett's brigade overtook the enemy, who had retreated on Stannardsville, and drove him rapidly. The enemy, under Lomax, retreated over the bridge which crosses the Rapidan to Liberty mills, and fired it, checking our pursuit, and then opened from the high grounds beyond with artillery. A reconnoissance was made, and as its result, Kellogg's brigade of Deven's division crossed the river by a ford on the right, and Cafhart's brigade of Powell's division on the left. The right had some sharp skirmishing, but the left met little opposition in crossing. The enemy, however, fell back once more, to avoid flanking, and Cafhart attacked him with spirit, Kellogg on the right being equally prompt.

Next morning, Thursday, the 22d, the enemy's two guns were found abandoned, with full ammunition-chests, and horses. Kellogg pushed on to within two or three miles of Gordonsville. There he found the enemy very strongly posted in a narrow pass on the turnpike road. Torbert accordingly turned about and retraced his steps to Madison Court House, and thence to Warrenton. Deven marched thence through Salem to Ashby's gap and Millwood, and back to Winchester. Powell marched through New Baltimore, White Plains, Middleburg, Snickersville, and Perrysville, to Winchester. Both columns destroyed forage and cattle on their route, with such other devasta-

tion as was possible. They were harassed a little on their return by the enemy, who promptly issued from Gordonsville, but no damage of importance was done to either column. The raid seems to have been quite successful. Our total loss was probably only about fifty men. Our last cavalry fight is the one which the enemy describes as occurring at Jack's shop, seven and a-half miles from Gordonsville. He says that there are no government stores or property of any kind at Gordonsville, and all we could do there would be to burn the empty buildings, and break the track and switches.

On Monday, the 19th, a co-operative cavalry column, consisting of Custer's division, moved out from camp on a reconnoissance up the valley. A party of scouts under Major Young, preceded the column, and skirmished on Monday and Tuesday with the enemy's pickets, capturing a few of them. On Tuesday night, the 20th, the column had reached and bivouacked at Lacey's spring, nine miles from Harrisonburg. Just before daylight, next morning, the camp was surprised by Rosser's cavalry, and forty or fifty of the first New Hampshire, on picket duty, were captured. Both brigades, Pennington's first and Chapman's second, became sharply engaged, and eventually fell back down the turnpike—our total loss, however, being only two killed and twenty-two wounded, with about forty prisoners. The advance of an infantry column of the enemy is said to have been the cause of our falling back. The enemy were dressed in blue overcoats, probably captured ones, and much confusion resulted, of course, in the fighting. His loss was about the same as ours in killed and wounded. He used the sabre chiefly, as the wounds of our men attested. The column returned to Winchester without further adventure.

Soon after the events now recorded, the entire sixth



corps was withdrawn from Sheridan, and sent to Grant at Richmond.

### MARCH TO LYNCHBURG.

On Monday, the 27th of February, 1865, Sheridan's column commenced its march from the camp near Winchester. General Hancock was placed in charge of the Middle Military Division, during the absence of General Sheridan, with headquarters at Winchester. During the first twenty-four hours, Sheridan marched to Woodstock, a distance of thirty miles. Keeping straight up the valley, he reached Waynesboro' on Thursday. There Early first offered effective resistance. A battle took place near Waynesboro', and it resulted in an entire victory for Sheridan, who captured one thousand three hundred prisoners, eight cannon, and about one hundred wagons.

### OFFICIAL DESPATCHES.

“WAR DEPARTMENT,  
“WASHINGTON, *March 5, 1865—8 P. M.* }

“MAJOR-GENERAL DIX, *New York :*

“The following despatches in relation to the reported defeat and capture of General Early by Sheridan, and the capture of Charlottesville, have been received by this Department. General Sheridan and his forces commenced their movement last Monday, and were at Staunton when last heard from. Major-General Hancock was placed in charge of the Middle Military Division, during the absence of General Sheridan, headquarters at Winchester.

(Signed) “E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*”

“CITY POINT, VA., *March 5—11 A.M.*

“TO HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War :*

“Deserters in this morning report that Sheridan has routed Early and captured Charlottesville. They report four regiments having gone from here to reinforce Early.

(Signed) “U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*”

"CITY POINT, VA., *March 5—2 P. M.*

"HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War* :

"Deserters from every point of the enemy's line confirm the capture of Charlottesville by General Sheridan. They say he captured General Early and nearly his entire force, consisting of one thousand eight hundred. Four brigades are reported as being sent to Lynchburg, to get there before General Sheridan, if possible.

(Signed) "U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*"

"CITY POINT, VA., *March 5—4 P. M.*

"HON. E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War* :

"Refugees confirm the statements of deserters as to the capture of General Early and nearly his entire force. They say it took place on Thursday last, between Staunton and Charlottesville, and that the defeat was total.

(Signed) "U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*"

"HEADQUARTERS MIDDLE MILITARY DIVISION, }

"COLUMBIA, VA., *Friday, March 10, 1865.* }

"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U.S. GRANT, *Commanding Armies of the United States* :

"GENERAL:—In my despatch dated Waynesboro', I gave you a brief account of the defeat of Early by Custer's division. The same night this division was pushed across the Blue Ridge, and entered Charlottesville at two P. M. the next day. The mayor of the city and the principal inhabitants came out and delivered up the keys of the public buildings.

"I had to remain at Charlottesville two days. This time was consumed in bringing over from Waynesboro' our ammunition and pontoon trains. The weather was horrible beyond description, and the rain incessant. The two divisions were during this time occupied in destroying the two large iron bridges, one over the Rivanna river, and the other over Morse's creek, near Charlottesville, and the railroad for a distance of eight miles in the direction of Lynchburg.

"On the 6th of March, I sent the first division, General Deven commanding, to Scottsville, on the James river, with directions to send out light parties through the country and destroy all merchandise, mills, factories, bridges, etc., on the Rivanna river, the parties to join the division

at Scottsville. The division then proceeded along the canal to Duguidsville, fifteen miles from Lynchburg, destroying every lock, and in many places the banks of the canal. At Duguidsville we hoped to secure the bridge to let us cross the river, as our pontoons were useless on account of the high water. In this, however, we were foiled, as both this bridge and the bridge at Hardwicksville were burned by the enemy upon our approach. Merritt accompanied this division.

"The third division started at the same time from Charlottesville, and proceeded down the Lynchburg railroad to Amherst Court House, destroying every bridge on the road, and in many places miles of the road. The bridges on the road are numerous, and some of them five hundred feet in length.

"We have found great abundance in this country for our men and animals; in fact, the canal had been the great feeder of Richmond. At the Rockfish river, the bank of the canal was cut, and at New Canton, where the dam is across the James, the guard lock was destroyed, and the James river let into the canal, carrying away the banks, and washing out the bottom of the canal. The dam across the James at this point was also partially destroyed.

"I have had no opposition. Everybody is bewildered by our movements. I have had no news of any kind since I left. The latest Richmond paper was of the 4th, but contained nothing.

"I omitted to mention that the bridges on the railroad from Swoop's depot, on the other side of Staunton, to Charlottesville, were utterly destroyed; also, all bridges for a distance of ten miles on the Gordonsville railroad.

"The weather has been very bad indeed, raining hard every day, with the exception of four days, since we started. My wagons have, from the state of the roads, detained me.

"Up to the present time we have captured fourteen pieces of artillery, eleven at Waynesboro', and three at Charlottesville. The party that I sent back from Waynesboro' started with six pieces, but they were obliged to destroy two of the six for want of animals. The remaining eight pieces were thoroughly destroyed.

"We have captured up to the present time twelve canal-

boats, laden with supplies, ammunition, rations, medical stores, etc.

"I cannot speak in too high terms of Generals Merritt, Custer, and Deven, and the officers and men of their commands. They have waded through mud and water during this continuous rain, and are all in fine spirits and health.

"Commodore Hollins, of the rebel navy, was shot near Gordonsville, while attempting to make his escape from our advance in that direction.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General Commanding.*"

Describing Sheridan's victories from official despatches, the *Army and Navy Journal* says :

When Sheridan withdrew from Harrisonburg, after his advance up the valley, he paused at Cedar creek, two miles this side of Strasburg. Early followed him to Fisher's Hill, an equal distance on the other side. The intervening space of four miles, with the town in the centre, remained debatable ground. Two or three severe skirmishes, resulting from reconnoissances, the most considerable of which was the affair of Thursday, the 13th, showed that Early was bent upon the renewal of active hostilities. That veteran warrior has proved himself, despite the difference in years, quite as restless as Sheridan, and has exhibited a boldness which, at least when viewed in the light of defeat, amounts to absolute rashness. Both his famous raid through Maryland to Baltimore, and his campaign against Sheridan, have displayed the same quality of inordinate daring. The former was crowned with complete success ; but the latter with as unqualified disaster. A worthy successor of Stonewall Jackson, so far as intrepidity goes, he was fated to meet a very different antagonist in the valley from those whom Jackson so easily overthrew. When he encountered a general who, with equal energy, boldness, and skill, stood at the head of an army superior in numbers, Early's fortunes declined. Three

successive and severe defeats at Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar creek, have attested the fatal mistakes in his military policy. The elasticity with which he recovered, after his former defeats, is indeed very surprising now, and warns us not to credit too much the exultant stories of his utter annihilation. But let him recuperate his army as he may, Early's prestige for the present is gone.

Under the impression that the enemy's army was dispirited, if not essentially destroyed, Sheridan was arranging new combinations of great importance. He had sent the sixth corps to Front Royal, and made cavalry dispositions in the same quarter. Whether this move was for the purpose of transporting a part of his force to Grant by way of the Manassas Gap railroad, of which he had lately taken thorough possession, or to operate afresh "on another line" east of the Blue Ridge, or whatever its purpose, we need not speculate, because events have greatly changed those anticipations. The fortunate interception of despatches disclosed that Early was still in fighting condition, and had been reinforced, both with good men and good guns, from Richmond, to supply his large losses in those particulars. Every preparation was made to receive him, the sixth corps being recalled from Front Royal to the right of the infantry line. But in spite of this intelligence, and of Early's hostile demonstration, Sheridan determined to visit Washington, where he had important affairs to transact. He started thither on Saturday, the 15th, two days after Thorburn's severe affair near Strasburg.

Our line lay along the easterly bank of Cedar creek, with the nineteenth corps in front of the bridge and ford, across which the turnpike crosses, the eighth corps on its left, and the sixth on its right. The two former were strongly intrenched, and the whole position was good. The first and third cavalry divisions covered the right



flank, and Powell's cavalry picketed the whole north fork on the left as far as Front Royal. Our line then beginning on the right, ran across the valley thus : Custer, Merritt, Wright (Ricketts), Emory, Crook, Powell. General Wright was in command. Before dawn of Wednesday, the 19th, a raw and misty morning, a heavy flanking column of the enemy, under cover of the fog, gained, unperceived, Crook's left and rear, captured nearly all his skirmish line, and was fairly inside his intrenchments before a drum was beat, or the scattering outpost fire had wakened the bewildered camp from its slumbers. Simultaneously, Early burst across Cedar creek in front, carrying the ford and bridge. Seven pieces of artillery quickly fell into his hands. The rout of the eighth corps was followed by that of the nineteenth, whose left flank was exposed by the breaking of the former. Eleven more pieces of artillery were captured, and like the former, turned upon our flying troops. Day broke upon a wretched scene of scattered commands. Our entire position had been turned, a thousand prisoners, eighteen cannon, our camp equipage, and other spoils captured, and the exultant enemy pressing us away from the turnpike, was hastening along its easterly side to Middletown, whence our immense trains were driving post-haste to Winchester. A terrific artillery fire from the other side of Cedar creek, and a steady roll of musketry on the hither side, threw consternation and death into our ranks. Here and there subdivisions bravely contested the ground. At other points multitudes of stragglers were breaking in panic to the rear. The sixth corps were soon brought up to cover the retreat, and Custer and Merritt, hitherto not engaged, except in a preliminary feint made by the enemy's cavalry on the right, were sent across to the support of the left. The line continued to give way. The enemy seized Middletown and planted his batteries there, while our troops fell

back to Newtown. There General Wright, who had never lost heart or hope, had resolved to make another stand, determined yet to win the day. Four miles from the strong position we had lost, the line was once more forming, during a fortunate lull in the battle.

At this moment, Sheridan came upon the field. He had ridden at top speed from Winchester, where he had arrived from Washington, passing his retreating trains, his ambulances filled with wounded, and the crowds of fugitives who were rushing "demoralized" to the rear. Every thing told him plainly that his army, as he expresses it, had been "driven in confusion." Arriving at ten and a-half o'clock—his horse covered with foam—he made known his presence to the army, and was received with cheers. The knowledge of the absence of the head of the army had done much hitherto to prevent the recovery of the lost day. But now, Wright's retreat had drawn the main army from the enemy's severe fire, and caused the latter to follow him to a new position. Early also found himself forced to take a short interval of rest, in order to recuperate his exhausted troops, as well as to get them well in hand to confront our new line. Only a few troops of the sixth corps, were now hotly engaged, as the enemy had ceased to press us so severely. Rest and the postponed breakfast had begun to suggest to our men that matters were not so desperate as they seemed. Once able to halt without being mowed down under fire, they could discuss more coolly the possibility of even driving the enemy. To turn the scale, Sheridan's opportune appearance came, and restored to his men that confidence and enthusiasm which cannot be counted on in an army except when its proper leader is in command.

Until after mid-day, the lull in the general battle continued. But at one o'clock, the enemy, having dragged his artillery up to confront the new line, began tossing shells with ac-

curacy into our ranks. The line was left as Wright had formed it, except that Custer's cavalry division had been thrown across from the left to the right. It now ran thus: Custer, Wright, Emory, Crook, Merritt. At Front Royal, Powell remained quiet, being cut off from the other troops. Very soon the enemy came up once more on the charge. A prolonged and terrible encounter followed, the main part of which fell on the nineteenth and sixth corps. But he no longer contended with men surprised and bewildered by a fierce daylight attack, from which his impetuous rush had not suffered them to recover. The rapidity of his fighting, fortunate in one respect, was fatal in another. The lull which the exhaustion of his men demanded, proved the cause of his subsequent reverse. Our troops, also, now had their "second breath," and, well posted, received the enemy's charge on equal terms, awake, alert, and expectant. The odds were in our favor, and after a desperate effort, he recoiled to Middletown.

Troops who could check the enemy after such bitter and continued reverse, could certainly advance. Accordingly, after an incessant duel of artillery and musketry, the charge was ordered. Between three and four o'clock the whole line went forward, infantry and cavalry alike. A terrific fire greeted them from Middletown. But they pressed on, and despite an obstinate and sanguinary resistance, carried the village, where the enemy had made visible preparations to stay, and put him to flight. The hard work was all over, and the day substantially won. It only remained to pursue and to gather up the spoils their hasty flight would compel the fugitives to relinquish. Our twenty-four lost guns, camp equipage, and lost wagons, ambulances, and horses, were retaken. The cavalry forded Cedar creek and kept on to Strasburg, where, in his hurried retreat, the enemy had got his wagons and most of his artillery into an inextricable jumble along

the road. On our approach the riders cut their traces and rode away, abandoning every thing to us without a struggle. The capture of flags, cannon, and prisoners, was now mere play compared with the preceding work of the day. On account of the approach of night, and the complete exhaustion of our troops, however, there was no elaborate pursuit. Our infantry remained in the old camps at Cedar creek, a part being thrown out two miles further, to Strasburg. Some of the cavalry went as far as Fisher's Hill, but none pursued more than three or four miles beyond Cedar creek. The next day the cavalry went up the valley as far as Woodstock, and made more captures of stragglers and abandoned material. But the enemy was far ahead, and had made good his retreat to Mount Jackson. The cavalry therefore returned to the neighborhood of Fisher's Hill.

In every aspect the victory was complete and decisive. The staggering blow it has inflicted on the enemy's resources will be evident from considering the simple fact that, wherever he loses man for man with us, he fatally weakens himself. Add the loss in cannon, small arms, and ammunition, and especially the loss in prestige and *morale*, and the importance of the affair at Cedar creek will be readily seen.

#### OFFICIAL DESPATCHES FROM MR. STANTON.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, }  
 "Thursday, October 20th, 1864—10.45 A.M. }

"MAJOR-GENERAL DIX :

"Another great battle was fought yesterday at Cedar creek, threatening at first a great disaster, but finally resulting in a victory for the Union forces under General Sheridan, more splendid than any heretofore achieved. The Department was advised yesterday evening of the commencement of the battle by the following telegrams :

‘RECTORTOWN, VIRGINIA, }  
 ‘Wednesday, October 19th, 1864—4 P.M. }  
 ‘MAJOR-GENERAL H. W. HALLECK, *Chief of Staff*:  
 ‘Heavy cannonading has recommenced in the valley,  
 and is now going on. C. C. AUGUR, *Major-General*.’

‘HARPER’S FERRY, VIRGINIA—6.40 P.M. }  
 ‘Wednesday, October 19th, 1864. }  
 ‘HON. E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*:  
 ‘Firing at the front has been continuous during the day.  
 The direction seemed at intervals to be to the left of  
 Winchester, as if at Berry’s ferry.  
 ‘No news from the front.  
 ‘JOHN D. STEVENSON, *Brigadier-General*.’

‘HARPER’S FERRY, VIRGINIA—8.45 P.M. }  
 ‘Wednesday, October 19th, 1864. }  
 ‘HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*:  
 ‘The enemy attacked our army with great impetuosity  
 this morning at daylight.  
 ‘The attack was made on the left of the eighth corps,  
 and was at first successful, they capturing some guns,  
 prisoners, and wagons. Our line was reformed, and  
 heavy fighting continued through the day.  
 ‘Sheridan was reported at Winchester this morning,  
 and went to the front.  
 ‘The particulars received are not official, and are not  
 favorable, though no serious disaster could have occurred  
 without direct news from Sheridan. Respectfully,  
 ‘JOHN D. STEVENSON, *Brigadier-General*.’

“Matters remained in the doubtful state represented by  
 the foregoing telegrams until this morning at 9.30, when  
 the following telegram was received, unofficially, reporting  
 the great victory won by Sheridan’s army:

‘HARPER’S FERRY, VIRGINIA, }  
 ‘Thursday, October 20th, 1864—9.30 A.M. }  
 ‘News from Sheridan’s headquarters at midnight, is to  
 the effect that the enemy surprised our forces yesterday  
 morning, driving the command in some confusion this  
 side of Newtown, capturing artillery and prisoners.  
 ‘Sheridan arrived in the field, reorganized our forces,



drove the enemy beyond Strasburg, capturing, it is reported, forty-three pieces of artillery, one hundred wagons and ambulances, and some two thousand prisoners.

'The rout of the enemy is said to be complete. This is not official, but I think reliable.

'J. D. STEVENSON, *Brigadier-General.*'

'A few minutes later the following official report of his victory was received from Major-General Sheridan :

'CEDAR CREEK, }

'Wednesday, October 19th, 1864—10 P.M. }

'TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT, *City Point* :

'I have the honor to report that my army at Cedar creek was attacked this morning before daylight, and my left was turned and driven in confusion.

'In fact, most of the line was driven in confusion, with the loss of twenty pieces of artillery.

'I hastened from Winchester, where I was on my return from Washington, and found the armies between Middletown and Newtown, having been driven back about four miles. I here took the affair in hand, and quickly uniting the corps, formed a compact line of battle just in time to repulse an attack of the enemy, which was handsomely done at about one P.M.

'At three P.M., after some changes of the cavalry from the left to the right flank, I attacked with great vigor, driving and routing the enemy, capturing, according to the last report, forty-three pieces of artillery, and very many prisoners.

'I do not know yet the number of my casualties, or the losses of the enemy.

'Wagons, trains, ambulances, and caissons, in large numbers, are in our possession.

'They also burned some of their trains. General Ramseur is a prisoner in our hands, severely and perhaps mortally wounded.

'I have to regret the loss of General Bidwell, killed, and Generals Wright, Grover, and Ricketts, wounded. Wright is slightly wounded.

'Affairs at times looked badly, but by the gallantry of our brave officers and men, disaster has been converted into a splendid victory.

'Darkness again intervened to shut off greater results.

'I now occupy Strasburg.

'As soon as obtained I will send you further particulars.

P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*'

"The battle was fought on the same day, 19th of the month, that witnessed Sheridan's victory in September.

"What the numbers were opposed to General Sheridan are not yet reported to the Department, but the boldness, vigor and success of the attack, strongly indicate that a heavy reinforcement had been sent from Richmond, with the expectation of fulfilling Longstreet's boast to smash up Sheridan.

"Longstreet was known to be in the valley, and had assumed command of the rebel army, and confident hopes of an overwhelming disaster to the Union army were boastfully expressed for several days back by the rebel adherents in Washington and Baltimore.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*"

---

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., }  
 "Friday, Oct. 21st, 1864—11.40 A.M. }

"MAJOR-GENERAL DIX :

"The following telegram, received this morning, contains further particulars of the battle of Cedar creek :

'CEDAR CREEK, VIRGINIA—11.30 A.M., }  
 'Thursday, October 20th, 1864. }

'LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT, *City Point :*

'We have again been favored by a great victory, won from disaster, by the gallantry of our officers and men.

'The attack on the enemy was made about three P.M., by a left half-wheel of the whole line, with a division of cavalry, turning each flank of the enemy, the whole line advancing.

'The enemy, after a stubborn resistance, broke and fled, and were pushed with vigor. The artillery captured will probably be over fifty pieces.

'This, of course, includes what were captured from our troops in the early morning. At least sixteen hundred prisoners have been brought in; also wagons and ambulances in large numbers.

'This morning the cavalry made a dash at Fisher's Hill

and carried it, the enemy having fled during the night, leaving only a small rear-guard.

‘I have to regret the loss of many valuable officers killed and wounded, among them Colonel Joseph Thorburn, commanding a division of Crook’s command, killed ; Colonel J. Howard Kitchen, commanding a brigade, wounded ; Colonel R. G. McKinzie, commanding a brigade, wounded severely, but would not leave the field. I cannot yet give exact details.

‘Many of our men captured in the morning have made their escape, and are coming in.

‘Ramseur, commanding a division in Early’s army, died this morning.

‘P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General Commanding.*’

“General Grant’s appreciation of the victory at Cedar creek is expressed in the following despatch :

‘CITY POINT, *Thursday, October 20th, 1864—8 P.M.*

‘HON. EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

I had a salute of one hundred guns from each of the armies here fired in honor of Sheridan’s last victory. Turning what bid fair to be disaster into a glorious victory, stamps Sheridan, what I always thought him, one of the ablest of generals.

‘U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*’

“The medical director reports that seven hundred and seventy slightly wounded have reached Winchester from the field.

“All the wounded that are able to bear transportation will be forwarded immediately to Martinsburg.

“The telegraph line is now working to Atlanta, but no late reports have been received by the Department.

“EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*”

### RAID TOWARD RICHMOND.

The value of the movements of General Sheridan in closing the campaign that resulted in the fall of Richmond and of the rebellion, is thus summed up by the *Army and Navy Journal* of March 25th, 1865 :

“His despatches give an account of his success up to the time of reaching Columbia. On the 15th instant he reported from the bridge of the Richmond and Fredericks

burg railroad, across the South Anna river, that, having destroyed the James river canal as far to the east as Goochland, he marched up the Virginia Central railroad at Tollsville, and destroyed it down to Beaver Dam station, totally breaking up fifteen miles of the road. General Custer was then sent to Ashland, and General Deven to the South Anna bridges—all of which have been destroyed. General Sheridan says the amount of property destroyed on his march is enormous. The enemy attempted to prevent his burning the Central railroad bridge over the South Anna, but the fifth United States cavalry charged up to the bridge, and about thirty men dashed across on foot, driving off the enemy and capturing three pieces of artillery, twenty-pounder Parrotts.

“At noon of the 10th, Sheridan’s advance arrived on the north bank of the Pamunkey, a few miles from White House, and soon crossed the river. An officer of Grant’s staff states that Sheridan lost about fifty men and two officers, all told. His men are mounted, excepting about two hundred and fifty. They captured many horses and mules, and shot all the broken-down animals. Nearly two hundred negroes came in with him. Women have travelled on foot, carrying children two years old, and kept up with his cavalry all the way from Columbia. At Charlottesville, he was obliged to station a rear guard to prevent the negroes following him by hundreds, as he was at that time unable to feed them, or to afford the slightest protection. He advanced to within fifteen miles of Lynchburg, and came within twelve of Richmond. Not a bridge is left on the James between the two cities; and not a railroad bridge between Staunton and Charlottesville. His destruction of the canal is thorough. One viaduct could not be rebuilt in six months in time of peace. In one or two places the river was turned into the canal, and washed it out fifteen feet below the level.

"The enemy's accounts say that our troops followed the Orange and Alexandria railroad as far as Buffalo river, burning the railroad bridge at that point. Every bridge between Charlottesville and Buffalo, a distance of more than forty miles, has been destroyed, and much of the track torn up, though the extent of the damage done has not yet been ascertained. The nearest approach they made to Lynchburg was New Glasgow, seventeen miles distant, where a small party of them burnt the railroad depot. Our forces commenced at Bent Creek the work of destruction to the canal, which is very badly damaged from about twenty-five miles below Lynchburg to Columbia, and further down toward Richmond. Every lock on the canal is said to have been destroyed. In several places the banks have been blown away. The aqueduct at Columbia is badly damaged. The destruction of private property along the route of the raiders is represented to be immense."

#### FROM GENERAL SHERIDAN.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, }  
"Friday, March 17—3 P. M. }

"Major-General Sheridan reports on the 15th instant, from the bridge of the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad across the South Anna river, that, having destroyed the James river canal as far to the east as Goochland, he marched up to the Virginia Central railroad at Tollsville and destroyed it down to Beaver Dam station, totally destroying fifteen miles of the road. General Custer was then sent to Ashland, and General Devens to the South Anna bridges, all of which have been destroyed. General Sheridan says the amount of property destroyed in his march is enormous. The enemy attempted to prevent the burning of the Central railroad bridge over the South Anna, but the fifth United States cavalry charged up to the bridge, and about thirty men dashed across on foot, driving off the enemy and capturing three pieces of artillery, twenty-pounder Parrotts.

"C. A. DANA, *Assistant Secretary of War.*"



## CHAPTER XII.

## SHERIDAN'S PART IN THE FALL OF THE REBEL CAPITAL.

Soon after the failure of Lee's attack, on the morning of March 25th, 1865, the evidences of his intended retrograde multiplied. Sheridan accordingly hurried through to the left of our lines, and Grant prepared to strike the enemy before he should get away from his capital.

Sheridan, on Sunday, the 26th of March, reached City Point. On Monday, the 27th, he took position in Gregg's old cavalry camp, on the left and rear of the Army of the Potomac. At one point the enemy opened on his column with shell, and this, with the attack on Getty's front in the sixth corps, which was well met, occasioned the principal firing of the day. But, on the same day, orders were received at the various field-hospitals to remove the sick and wounded to City Point, and to keep the hospitals in readiness for any emergency that might arise. At twelve o'clock at night the whole Army of the Potomac was put under marching orders.

Sheridan's cavalry took the extreme left, and made a wide detour to Dinwiddie Court House. Warren's fifth corps came next, then Humphreys' second. The sixth and ninth corps still held the lines around Petersburg. On the 27th, troops were selected from the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth corps—Ord's Army of the James—and the same night marched across the river, leaving the remainder of the two corps to garrison our position north of the James.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 29th, the cavalry left camp, marching down the Jerusalem plank-road to Reams' station on the Weldon railroad. Its new organi-

zation divided it into two wings, Crook commanding the right, and Merritt the left. Crook was in advance. Custer brought up the rear, guarding the trains. The roads were bad. At half past nine, Rowanty creek was reached at Malone's bridge, and the bridge found to be destroyed. The creek was so difficult of approach as not to be fordable. Accordingly, the column was delayed four hours until a bridge could be built. Then the advance division got across, and pushed straight for Dinwiddie. The bad roads delayed the march, and our trains were deeply mired. A party, about eighty strong, of the sixteenth North Carolina, tried to impede our progress by felling trees; but they were quickly dispersed by a charge of the twenty-first Pennsylvania, of Irvin Gregg's division. A few prisoners were captured. The town was now occupied, and communication opened with Warren's corps on the right. It rained a little on the night of the 29th, and very hard all day on the 30th. The roads were consequently made so bad as to block the trains, and a great part of Sheridan's force was employed in guarding them. The rest moved up to the Boydton road, according to the plan of action already arranged.

Early in the morning Sheridan connected his right with Warren's left, near the Boydton plank-road. The enemy was found to have a very strong line of intrenchments already erected to cover the position known as Five Forks. Merritt's corps was therefore sent out in this direction to turn the enemy's right. The advance, Deven's brigade, soon encountered the enemy's cavalry, who were driven back to the works. Then the enemy's infantry in turn drove back our cavalry, and the latter pushed out once more to find the enemy's left, confident that there must be an end to his line somewhere, if they could only find it. The enemy's right was commanded by Anderson, and Pickett's division of Anderson's corps held the

extreme right. His intrenchments completely covered the White Oak road, which runs from the Boydton road to the Southside railroad. From the White Oak road up towards Hatcher's run, the enemy's troops were in strong force. He baffled all our attempts on Thursday to turn him by cavalry, as his works, manned by infantry, checked us at all points.

But the movements of our own main body prepared for the greater contest of Friday. Ayres' division, of the fifth corps, was moved clear across the Boydton road as far as the White Oak road. Griffin and Crawford followed. The second corps by noon had advanced a mile and a-half, to where it could have a plain view of the enemy's main works. Birney's and Foster's divisions also pushed forward, and occupied the enemy's picket-lines after a very smart skirmish. Artillery was used here by the enemy, and also in front of Smyth's brigade, in the advance of the second corps. Our total losses during the day were less than two hundred. The fifth corps lost twenty-six, and the other corps perhaps averaged the same. At the close of the day, the fifth corps occupied a position about a mile north of the junction of the Quaker and Boydton roads. During the day it had pushed on nearly due west about three-fourths of a mile, and lay fronting northward, with the pickets of Ayres' division within five hundred yards of the White Oak road, at a point between two and three miles west of its intersection with the Boydton road. To the right of Ayres was Crawford, and on Crawford's right, Griffin. On the right of the fifth corps lay the second, which now had its right near Hatcher's run, while its left rested on the Boydton plank-road near Burgess's Tavern, about one mile south of the bridge across Hatcher's run. Sheridan continued to cover our left flank, and remained at Din-

widdie, his sharp skirmishing having told him that the enemy would risk a severe battle for the railroad.

The second division lay on Stony creek, southwest of Dinwiddie, Smith's, Davies', and Gregg's brigades all supporting, and holding the left of Sheridan's line. Next to Davies, and northeasterly, lay Fitzhugh's brigade of Davies' division, facing southeast, and next beyond, Stagg's Michigan brigade of the same division was posted on Gravelly run, six miles from Dinwiddie. About two miles from Dinwiddie was Gibbs' (third) brigade of Davies' division. Soon after noon, the fifth corps having been driven back, the enemy attacked Smith's brigade in force, and a few prisoners were taken on each side; but our troops held their ground. Davies' brigade, on the right of Smith, next received the enemy's attention. It held the bridge across Stony creek. The brigade stubbornly resisted, but the enemy forded the creek, flanked it, and forced it back with severe loss. The tenth and twenty-fourth New York were heavily engaged, and many officers were wounded. The enemy, having crossed the ford, now attacked Sheridan's left centre once more in force, and drove it back. The commands were faced into new positions as rapidly as possible, and reinforcements hurried forward. By five o'clock the greater part of both divisions had been repulsed and driven back several miles to the Boydton road, while Gibbs' had fallen back to about a mile from Dinwiddie. But now the enemy had encountered our entire force. Merritt's troops were reformed, and Custer's division, with Capehart on the left, and Pennington on the right, held a firm position. The enemy, who had been reinforced with a part of Pickett's and Johnson's divisions—the troops employed against the fifth corps—came down with a furious charge, cheering and gallantly advancing. Very hard fighting took place here. But our artillery in position, and our very large

force of cavalry, now rallied, and ably handled by Sheridan in person, eventually forced him to desist. A few desperate charges left our men immovable, and the enemy, well content with his day's work, drew off to the woods. Our forces immediately intrenched.

The fifth corps did not long pause on the Boydton road. When the enemy had ceased the pursuit, it was rallied again. Griffin's division took the new advance, and with Chamberlain's brigade leading, and Bartlett and Gregory in close support, soon passed over the abandoned ground. The enemy, who was now chiefly engaged with Sheridan, fell back before our men. The whole ground was regained, with sharp fighting and marching. It was then designed to abandon a part of it once more. But Griffin's division, desiring to capture the earthwork from which the enemy had issued, it was moved on, carried the work, and took position on the White Oak road, east of Five Forks.

### THE BATTLE OF FIVE FORKS.

Sheridan had been placed in command of all the cavalry and of the fifth corps by Grant, who had reason to believe that this was the best way to prevent the disasters of the day preceding from being repeated. He now controlled nearly four divisions of cavalry and three of infantry, a force not far from thirty thousand strong, and of double the strength which the enemy could concentrate against him at Five Forks, while our army threatened the whole length of the protracted line from Dinwiddie to Petersburg. Lee is said to have had only two divisions at the point attacked by Sheridan. The latter's plan seems to have been to break through the enemy's line in such a manner as to enclose Five Forks and its garrison, and to capture them. He was completely and gloriously successful. And he deserves great credit for having formed



and carried out an actual tactical plan, and not a mere plunging of troops forward in questionable experiment.

The cavalry started for their appointed positions at daybreak of Saturday, Custer and Deven slowly driving the enemy toward the left of their works on the White Oak road. These divisions now dismounted, and fought with carbines. The brigades of Gregg and Mackenzie were kept in the saddle, so as to move rapidly on the flank of the enemy. In this way Sheridan worked his men steadily up to the enemy's intrenchments on all sides. The enemy fell slowly back through the broken country to his main position, delivering a terrific fire upon our men, who fell in great numbers. Still, however, Sheridan kept his men up to the task, and gradually got all his forces well into position, with a division or more well round upon the enemy's flank and rear, and the rest of his troops pressing slowly and with much loss upon the front of the works. And now came the grand attack of all our forces. Warren's corps had, after its repulse of the day before to the Boydton road, and the repulse of the cavalry to Dinwiddie, moved to the Butler House, and thence on the road toward Ford's station. About three o'clock on Saturday, the fifth corps was ordered forward to support the cavalry, and marched from Boisseau's house on the Boydton road, until it halted, facing obliquely the White Oak road, with Ayres on the left, Crawford in the centre, and Griffin on the right. The corps was now manœuvred so as to execute what custom has allowed to be a "left wheel" of the line of battle, Ayres' division being a sort of pivot, with Griffin as the outer flank. Very little regularity, however, was observed in this movement. The enemy fell back slowly and stubbornly at first, and then, at five o'clock, comprehending the dangerous position in which he had been placed, made a decisive stand. For two hours one of the most terrific

contests of the war went on. The cavalry pressed on one flank, and Griffin led the fifth corps in person on the other. The enemy were few in numbers, but fought with gallantry worthy of a better cause.

Strongly intrenched, and with a battery in position, they raked our brave columns with the fire of hell. Several times our men, heroic as they were, staggered back from the intrenchments, appalled at the slaughter, and it seemed that another would be added to the list of unhappy attempts of the army. But Sheridan was determined not to fail. He lent his personal presence to all parts of the field, and by turns cheered, urged, and drove his men. At length our troops had surrounded the enemy on all sides, and completely exhausted him. They swarmed over his parapets. Great havoc had already been made in his own ranks. Many of his officers had been killed. Wearied and decimated, and seeing it useless to try to check us, the enemy broke to the rear through the only outlet left him. Our overwhelming forces rushed on him at once, and another fierce struggle resulted. By half-past seven o'clock the battle was over. About four thousand prisoners had been captured, four or eight cannon, an ambulance and baggage train, several thousand muskets, and twenty or thirty flags. Custer's and Mackenzie's divisions pressed on in pursuit of the enemy, and picked up many stragglers and fugitives.

About nine o'clock, the joyful intelligence of victory arrived at Grant's headquarters. Miles' division pushed on toward Sheridan in the evening. In order to co-operate with Sheridan somewhat, a general cannonade was ordered along our front, and at ten o'clock at night it opened. A terrific artillery action resulted, not surpassed in intensity during the siege. On some parts of the line there were also demonstrations by infantry, particularly on the second corps front. From ten to four the artillery

engagement was continued with great fury. The other main event of the day was the removal of General Warren from the command of the fifth corps by General Sheridan.

### FALL OF RICHMOND AND PETERSBURG.

On Sunday afternoon, April 2d, 1865, Lee, finding his army, after a gallant and thorough battle, no longer able to maintain its positions, gave orders for the evacuation of Richmond and Petersburg. This was accomplished the same night and early next day our forces pushed into both cities.

Sheridan's columns still pressed the enemy, making new captures. General Grant, who had been at Petersburg for two days, received, on the night of the fifth, a despatch from Sheridan, at Jettersville, which stated that Lee was probably at Amelia Court House on the same day. Jettersville is in Amelia county, about half way between Burksville and Amelia Court House, on the Danville railroad. On the fifth, Davis' cavalry brigade captured five guns, two hundred wagons, eight or nine battle-flags, and a number of prisoners. General Sheridan, in the heat of victory, and desirous that others should employ the tremendous energy which characterizes him, added the following significant words to Grant: "*I wish you were here yourself. I feel confident of our capturing the army of Northern Virginia, if we exert ourselves. I see no escape for Lee.*"

And there was none. He was captured from that hour.

### OFFICIAL REPORT OF GENERAL SHERIDAN.

CAVALRY HEADQUARTERS, *May 16, 1865.*

GENERAL:—I have the honor to submit the following narrative of the operations of my command during the recent campaign in front of Petersburg and Richmond, terminating with the surrender of the rebel army of

Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865.

On March 26, my command, consisting of the first and third cavalry divisions, under the immediate command of Brevet Major-General Wesley Merritt, crossed the James river by the bridge at Jones' landing, having marched from Winchester, in the Shenandoah valley, via White House, on the Pamunkey river.

On March 27, this command went into camp at Hancock station, on the military railroad in front of Petersburg, and on the same day the second cavalry division, which had been serving with the Army of the Potomac, reported to me under the command of Major-General George Crook.

The effective force of these divisions was as follows :

General Merritt's command first and third divisions,.....	5,700
General Crook's command, second division,.....	3,300
	<hr/>
Total effective force,.....	9,000

With this force I moved out on the 29th of March, in conjunction with the armies operating against Richmond, and in the subsequent operations I was under the immediate orders of the Lieutenant-General commanding.

I moved by the way of Reams' station on the Weldon railroad, and Malon's crossing on the Rowanty creek, where we were obliged to construct a bridge.

At this point our advance encountered a small picket of the rebel cavalry, and drove it to the left across Stony creek, capturing a few prisoners, from whom, and from my scouts, I learned that the enemy's cavalry was at or near Stony creek depot, on the Weldon railroad, on our left flank and rear. Believing that it would not attack me, and that by pushing on to Dinwiddie Court House I

could force it to make a wide detour, we continued the march, reaching the Court House about five o'clock p. m., encountering only a small picket of the enemy, which was driven away by our advance.

It was found necessary to order General Custer's division, which was marching in the rear, to remain near Malon's crossing, on the Rowanty creek, to assist and protect our trains, which were greatly retarded by the almost impassable roads of that miry section. The first and second divisions went into camp covering the Vaughan, Flat Foot, Boydton plank, and Five Forks roads, which all intersect at Dinwiddie Court House, rendering this an important point, and from which I was expected to make a cavalry raid on the Southside railroad, and thence join General Sherman, or return to Petersburg, as circumstances might dictate. However, during the night the Lieutenant-General sent me instructions to abandon the contemplated raid, and act in concert with the infantry under his immediate command, and turn the right flank of Lee's army, if possible.

Early on the morning of the 30th of March, I directed General Merritt to send the first division, Brigadier-General Deven commanding, to gain possession of the Five Forks on the White Oak road, and directed General Crook to send General Davies' brigade of his division to the support of General Deven.

Gregg's brigade, of Crook's division, was held on the Boydton plank road, and guarded the crossing of Stony creek, forcing the enemy's cavalry, that was moving from Stony creek depot to form a connection with the right of their army, to make a wide detour, as I had anticipated, on the south side of Stony creek, and west of Chamberlain's bed—a very fatiguing march in the bad condition of the roads. A very heavy rain fell during this day, aggravating the swampy nature of the ground, and render-



ing the movements of troops almost impossible. General Merritt's reconnoissance developed the enemy in strong force on the White Oak road in the vicinity of the Five Forks, and there was some heavy skirmishing throughout the day. Next morning, March 31, General Merritt advanced toward the Five Forks with the first division, and meeting with considerable opposition, General Deven's brigade, of Crook's division, was ordered to join him, while General Crook, advancing on the left with the two other brigades of his division, encountered the enemy's cavalry at Chamberlain's creek, at a point a little west of Dinwiddie, making demonstrations to cross. Smith's brigade was ordered to hold them in check and Gregg's brigade to a position on his right. The advance of the first division got possession of the Five Forks, but in the mean time the fifth army corps, which had advanced toward the White Oak road from the Vaughan road, was attacked and driven back, and withdrawing from that point, this force of the enemy marched rapidly from the front of the fifth corps to the Five Forks, driving in our cavalry advance, and moving down on roads west of Chamberlain's creek, attacked General Smith's brigade, but were unable to force his position. Abandoning the attempt to cross in his front, this force of the enemy's infantry succeeded in effecting a crossing higher up the creek, striking General Davies' brigade, of the second division, which, after a gallant fight, was forced back upon the left flank of the first division, thus partially isolating all this force from my main line covering Dinwiddie Court House.

Orders were at once given to General Merritt to cross this detached force over to the Boydton plank road, and march down to Dinwiddie Court House, and come into the line of battle. The enemy, deceived by this movement, followed it up rapidly, making a left wheel, and presenting his rear to my line of battle. When his line was nearly

parallel to mine, General Gibbs' brigade of the first division, and General Irvine Gregg's brigade of the second division were ordered to attack at once, and General Custer was directed to bring up two of his brigades rapidly, leaving one brigade of his division with the trains that had not yet reached Dinwiddie Court House. In the gallant attack made by Gibbs and Gregg the enemy's wounded fell into our hands, and he was forced to face by the rear rank, and give up his movement, which if continued would have taken in flank and rear the infantry line of the Army of the Potomac. When the enemy had faced to meet this attack a very obstinate and handsomely contested battle ensued, in which, with all his cavalry and two divisions of infantry, the enemy was unable to drive five brigades of our cavalry, dismounted, from an open plain in front of Dinwiddie Court House. The brunt of their cavalry attack was borne by General Smith's brigade, which had so gallantly held the crossing of Chamberlain's creek in the morning. His command again held the enemy in check with determined bravery, but the heavy force brought against his right flank finally compelled him to abandon his position on the creek, and fall back to the main line immediately in front of Dinwiddie Court House. As the enemy's infantry advanced to the attack, our cavalry threw up slight breastworks of rails at some points along our lines, and when the enemy attempted to force this position they were handsomely repulsed, and gave up the attempt to gain possession of the Court House. It was after dark when the firing ceased, and the enemy lay on their arms that night not more than one hundred yards in front of our lines. The commands of Generals Deven and Davies reached Dinwiddie Court House without opposition by way of Boydton plank road, but did not participate in the final action of the day. In this well contested battle the most obstinate gallantry was displayed by

my entire command. The brigades commanded by General Gibbs and Colonels Stagg and Fitzhugh, in the first division, Generals Davies, Gregg, and Smith in the second division, Colonels Pennington and Capehart, in the third division, vied with each other in their determined efforts to hold in check the superior force of the enemy ; and the skilful management of their troops in this peculiarly difficult country entitles the brigade commanders to the highest commendation.

Generals Crook, Merritt, Custer, and Deven, by their courage and ability, sustained their commands, and executed the rapid movements of the day with promptness and without confusion.

During the right of the 31st of March, my headquarters were at Dinwiddie Court House, and the Lieutenant-General notified me that the fifth corps would report to me, and should reach me by midnight. This corps had been offered to me on the 30th instant, but very much desiring the sixth corps, which had been with me in the Shenandoah valley, I asked for it, but on account of the delay which would occur in moving that corps from its position in the lines in front of Petersburg, it could not be sent to me. I respectfully submit herewith my brief accounts of the operations of the day, the response to which was the ordering of the fifth corps to my support and my command, as also the despatch of the Lieutenant-General notifying me of his action. I understood that the fifth corps, when ordered to report to me, was in position near S. Dabney's house, in the angle between the Boydton road and the Five Forks road.

Had General Warren moved according to the expectations of the Lieutenant-General, there would appear to have been but little chance for the escape of the enemy's infantry in front of Dinwiddie Court House. Ayres' division moved down the Boydton plank road during the

night, and in the morning moved west via R. Boisseau's house, striking the Five Forks road about two and a half miles north of Dinwiddie Court House. General Warren, with Griffin's and Crawford's divisions, moved down the road by Crump's house, coming into the Five Forks road near J. Boisseau's house between seven and eight o'clock on the morning of the 1st of April. Meantime, I moved my cavalry force at daylight against the enemy's lines in front, which gave way rapidly, moving off by the right flank and crossing Chamberlain's creek. This hasty movement was accelerated by the discovery that two divisions of the fifth corps were in their rear, and that one division was moving toward their left and rear.

The following were the instructions sent to General Warren :

" CAVALRY HEADQUARTERS, }  
" DINWIDDIE C. H., *April 1, 1865—3 A. M.* }

" TO MAJOR-GENERAL WARREN, *Commanding Fifth Army Corps* :—I am holding in front of Dinwiddie Court House, on the road leading to Five Forks, for three quarters of a mile, with General Custer's division. The enemy are in his immediate front, lying so as to cover the road just this side of A. Adam's house, which leads out across Chamberlain's bed or run. I understand you have a division at J. Boisseau's ; if so, you are in rear of the enemy's lines, and almost on his flanks. I will hold on here. Possibly they may attack Custer at daylight ; if so, attack instantly, and in full force. Attack at daylight anyhow, and I will make an effort to get the road this side of Adam's house, and if I do, you can capture the whole of them. Any force moving down the road I am holding, or on the White Oak road, will be in the enemy's rear, and in all probability get any force that may escape you by a flank attack. Do not fear my leaving here. If the enemy remains, I shall fight at daylight.

" P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

As they fell back the enemy were rapidly followed by General Merritt's two divisions, General Devan on the

right, and General Custer on the left; General Crook in rear. During the remainder of the day General Crook's division held the extreme left and rear, and was not seriously engaged.

I then determined that I would drive the enemy, with the cavalry, to the Five Forks, press them inside of their works, and make a feint to turn their right flank, and meanwhile quietly move up the fifth corps with a view to attacking their left flank, crush the whole force, if possible, and drive westward those who might escape, thus isolating them from their army at Petersburg. Happily, this conception was successfully executed. About this time General McKenzie's division of cavalry, from the army of the James, reported to me, and consisted of about one thousand effective men. I directed General Warren to hold fast at J. Boisseau's house, refresh his men, and be ready to move to the front when required; and General McKenzie was ordered to rest in front of Dinwiddie Court House until further orders.

Meantime General Merritt's command continued to press the enemy, and by impetuous charges drove them from two lines of temporary works; General Custer guiding his advance on the widow Gilliam's house, and General Deven on the main Five Forks road. The courage displayed by the cavalry officers and men was superb, and about two o'clock the enemy was behind his works on the White Oak road, and his skirmish line drawn in. I then ordered up the fifth corps on the main road, and sent Brevet Major Gillespie, of the engineers, to turn the head of the column off on the Gravelly Church road, and put the corps in position on this road obliquely to and at a point but a short distance from the White Oak road, and about one mile from the Five Forks. Two divisions of the corps were to form the front line, and



one division was to be held in reserve in column of regiments opposite the centre.

I then directed General Merritt to demonstrate as though he was attempting to turn the enemy's right flank, and notified him that the fifth corps would strike the enemy's left flank, and ordered that the cavalry should assault the enemy's works as soon as the fifth corps became engaged, and that would be determined by the volleys of musketry. I then rode over to where the fifth corps was going into position, and found them coming up very slowly. I was exceedingly anxious to attack at once, for the sun was getting low, and we had to fight or go back. It was no place to intrench, and it would have been shameful to have gone back with no results to compensate for the loss of the brave men who had fallen during the day. In this connection, I will say that General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed. As soon as the corps was in position, I ordered an advance in the following formation: Ayres' division on the left in double lines, Crawford's division on the right in double lines, and Griffin's division in reserve, behind Crawford, and the White Oak road was reached without opposition.

While General Warren was getting into position, I learned that the left of the second corps of the Army of the Potomac, on my right, had been swung around from the direction of its line of battle until it fronted on the Boydton road, and parallel to it, which afforded an opportunity to the enemy to march down the White Oak road and attack me in right and rear. General McKenzie was therefore sent up the Crump road, with direction to gain the White Oak road if possible, but to attack at all hazards any enemy found, and if successful, then march

down that road and join me. General McKenzie executed this with courage and skill, attacking a force of the enemy on the White Oak road, and driving it toward Petersburg. He then countermarched, and joined me on the White Oak road just as the fifth corps advanced to the attack, and I directed him to swing round with the right of the infantry and gain possession of the Ford road at the crossing of Hatcher's run. The fifth corps, on reaching the White Oak road, made a left wheel, and burst on the enemy's left flank and rear like a tornádo, and pushed rapidly on, orders having been given that if the enemy was routed there should be no halt to reform broken lines. As stated before, the firing of the fifth corps was the signal to General Merritt to assault, which was promptly responded to, and the works of the enemy were soon carried at several points by our brave cavalymen. The enemy were driven from their strong line of works, and completely routed, the fifth corps doubling up their left flank in confusion, and the cavalry of General Merritt dashing on to the White Oak road, capturing their artillery, and turning it upon them, and, riding into their broken ranks, so demoralized them, that they made no serious stand after their line was carried, but took to flight in disorder. Between five thousand and six thousand prisoners fell into our hands, and the fugitives were driven westward, and were pursued until long after dark by Merritt's and McKenzie's cavalry, for a distance of six miles.

During this attack I again became dissatisfied with General Warren. During the engagement, portions of his line gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply from want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire. I therefore relieved him from the command of the fifth corps, authority for this action having been sent to me, before the battle, unsolicited. When the pursuit was

given up, I directed General Griffin, who had been ordered to assume command of the fifth corps, to collect his corps at once, march two divisions back to Gravelly Church, and put them into position at right angles to the White Oak road, facing toward Petersburg, while Bartlett's division, Griffin's old, covered the Ford road to Hatcher's run. General Merritt's cavalry went into camp on the widow Gilliam's plantation, and General McKenzie took position on the Ford road at the crossing of Hatcher's run. I cannot speak too highly of the conduct of the troops in this battle, and of the gallantry of their commanding officers, who appeared to realize that the success of the campaign and fate of Lee's army depended upon it. They merit the thanks of the country and reward of the government. To Generals Griffin, Ayres, Bartlett, and Crawford, of the fifth corps, and to Generals Merritt, Custer, Deven, and McKenzie, of the cavalry, great credit is due; and to their subordinate commanders they will undoubtedly award the praise which is due to them for the hearty coöperation, bravery, and ability which were everywhere displayed. At daylight on the morning of April 2d, General Miles' division of the second corps reported to me, coming over from the Boydton plank road. I ordered it to move up the White Oak road toward Petersburg, and attack the enemy at the intersection of that road with the Claiborne road, where he was in position in heavy force, and I followed General Miles immediately with two divisions of the fifth corps. Miles forced the enemy from this position, and pursued with great zeal, pushing him across Hatcher's run, and following him up on the road to Sutherland's depot. On the north side of the run I overtook Miles, who was anxious to attack, and had a very fine and spirited division. I gave him permission, but about this time General Humphreys came up, and receiving notice from General

Meade that General Humphreys would take command of Miles' division, I relinquished it at once, facing the fifth corps by the rear. I afterward regretted giving up this division, as I believe the enemy could at that time have been crushed at Sutherland's depot. I returned to Five Forks, and marched out the Ford road toward Hatcher's run.

The cavalry had in the meantime been sent westward, to cross Hatcher's run and break up the enemy's cavalry, which had collected in considerable force north of that stream, but they would not stand to fight, and our cavalry pursued them in a direction due north to the Namozine road. Crossing Hatcher's run with the fifth corps, the Southside railroad was struck at Ford's depot, meeting no opposition, and the fifth corps marched rapidly toward Sutherland's depot, in flank and rear of the enemy opposing Miles. As he approached that point, the force of the enemy fled before the fifth corps could reach them, retreating along the main road by the Appomattox river, the cavalry and Crawford's division of the fifth corps engaging them slightly about dusk. On the morning of the 3d our cavalry took up the pursuit, routing the enemy's cavalry, and capturing many prisoners. The enemy's infantry was encountered at Deep creek, where a severe fight took place. The fifth corps followed up the cavalry rapidly, picking up many prisoners, and five pieces of abandoned artillery, and a number of wagons. The fifth corps, with Crook's division of cavalry, encamped that night, the 4th, at Deep creek, on the Namozine road, neither of these commands having been engaged during the day. On the morning of the 4th, General Crook was ordered to strike the Danville railroad, between Jettersville and Burke's station, and then move up toward Jettersville. The fifth corps moved rapidly to that point, as I had learned from my scouts that the enemy was at

Amelia Court House, and every thing indicated that they were collecting at that point. On arriving at Jettersville, about five o'clock P. M., I learned without doubt that Lee and his whole army were at Amelia Court House.

The fifth corps was at once ordered to intrench, with a view of holding Jettersville until the main army could come up. It seems to me that this was the only chance the army of Northern Virginia had to save itself, which might have been done had General Lee promptly attacked and driven back the comparatively small force opposed to him, and pursued his march to Burkesville junction. A despatch from General Lee's chief commissary to the commissary at Danville and Lynchburg, requiring two hundred thousand rations to be sent to meet the army at Burkesville, was here intercepted. So soon as I found that the entire army of the enemy was concentrated at Amelia Court House, I forwarded promptly all the information I had obtained to General Meade and the Lieutenant-General. On the morning of April 5th, General Crook was directed to send General Davies' brigade to make a reconnoissance to Paine's cross-roads on our left and front, and ascertain if the enemy were making any movement towards that flank to escape. General Davies struck a train of one hundred and eighty wagons, escorted by a considerable force of the enemy's cavalry, which he defeated, capturing five pieces of artillery. He destroyed the wagons, and brought in a large number of prisoners. Gregg's and Smith's brigades, of the second division, were sent out to support Davies, and some heavy fighting ensued, the enemy having sent a strong force of infantry to attack and cut off Davies' brigade, which attempt was unsuccessful. During the afternoon, and after the arrival of the second corps at Jettersville, which General Meade requested me to put in position, he being ill, the enemy demonstrated strongly in front of Jettersville against



Smith's and Gregg's brigades of Crook's division of cavalry, but no serious attack was made. Early on the morning of April 6th, General Crook was ordered to move to the left to Deatonsville, followed by Custer's and Deven's divisions of General Merritt's command. The fifth corps had been returned to the command of General Meade at his request. I afterward regretted giving up the corps.

When near Deatonsville, the enemy's trains were discovered moving in the direction of Burkesville, or Farmville, escorted by heavy masses of infantry and cavalry, and it soon became evident that the whole of Lee's army was attempting to make its escape. Crook was at once ordered to attack the trains, and if the enemy was too strong, one of the divisions would pass him while he held fast and pressed the enemy, and attack at a point further on, and this division was ordered to do the same, and so on, alternating, and this system of attack would enable us finally to strike some weak point. This result was obtained just south of Sailor's creek, and on the high ground over that stream. Custer took the road, and Crook and Deven coming up to his support, sixteen pieces of artillery were captured, and about four hundred wagons destroyed, and many prisoners were taken, and three divisions of the enemy's infantry were cut off from the line of retreat. Meanwhile, Colonel Stagg, commanding the Michigan brigade of the first division, was held at a point about two and a half miles south of Deatonsville, and with this force, and a section of Miller's battery, which shelled the trains with excellent effect, while Colonel Stagg demonstrated to attack them, thus keeping a large force of the enemy from moving against the rest of the cavalry, and holding them until the arrival of the sixth corps, which was marching to report to me. I felt so strongly the necessity of holding this large force of the

enemy, that I gave permission to General Merritt to order Colonel Stagg's brigade to make a mounted charge against their lines, which was most gallantly done, the men leaving many of their horses dead almost up to the enemy's works.

On the arrival of the head of the sixth corps the enemy commenced withdrawing. Major-General Wright was ordered to put Seymour's division into position at once, and advance and carry the road, which was done at a point about two miles or two miles and a-half from Deatonville. As soon as the road was in our possession, Wright was directed to push General Seymour on, the enemy falling back, skirmishing briskly. Their resistance growing stubborn, a halt was called to get up Wheaton's division of the sixth corps, which went into position on the left of the road, Seymour being on the right. Wheaton was ordered to guide right, with his right connecting with Seymour's left, and resting on the road. I still felt the great importance of pushing the enemy, and was unwilling to wait for Getty's division of the sixth corps to get up. I therefore ordered an advance, sending word to General Humphreys, who was on the road to our right, and requesting him to push on, as I felt confident that we could break up the enemy. It was apparent from the absence of artillery fire, and the manner in which they gave way when pressed, that the force of the enemy opposed to us was a heavy rear guard. The enemy was driven until our lines reached Sailor's creek; and from the north bank I could see our cavalry on the high ground above the creek and south of it, and the long line of smoke from the burning wagons. A cavalryman, who, in a charge, cleared the enemy's works, and came through their lines, reported to me what was in front. I regret that I have forgotten the name of this gallant young soldier. As soon as General Wright could get his artillery

into position, I ordered the attack to be made on the left, and sent Colonel Stagg's brigade of cavalry to strike and flank the extreme right of the enemy's lines. The attack by the infantry was not executed exactly as I had directed, and a portion of our line in the open ground was broken by the terrible fire of the enemy, who were in position on commanding ground south of the creek.

This attack by Wheaton's and Seymour's divisions was splendid, but no more than I had reason to expect from the gallant sixth corps. The cavalry in rear of the enemy attacked simultaneously, and the enemy, after a gallant resistance, were completely surrounded, and nearly all threw down their arms and surrendered. General Ewell, commanding the enemy's forces, and a number of other general officers, fell into our hands, and a very large number of prisoners. I have never ascertained exactly how many prisoners were taken in this battle. Most of them fell into the hands of the cavalry, but they are no more entitled to claim them than the sixth corps, to which command equal credit is due for the good results of this engagement. Both the cavalry and the sixth corps encamped south of Sailor's creek that night, having followed up the small remnant of the enemy's forces for several miles. In reference to the participation of the sixth corps in this action, I desire to add that the Lieutenant-General had notified me that this corps would report to me. Major McClellan, and Lieutenant-Colonel Franklin, of General Wright's staff, had successively been sent forward to report the progress of the corps in coming up, and on the arrival of Major-General Wright he reported his corps to me, and from that time until after the battle, received my orders and obeyed them; but after the engagement was over, and General Meade had communicated with General Wright, the latter declined to make his report to me until ordered to do so by the Lieutenant-General.

On the 7th instant the pursuit was continued early in the morning by the cavalry, General Crook in the advance. It was discovered that the enemy had not been cut off by the army of the James, and under the belief that he would attempt to escape on the Danville road through Prince Edward Court House, General Merritt was ordered to move his two divisions to that point, passing around the left of the Army of the James. General Crook continued the direct pursuit, encountering the main body of the enemy at Farmville, and again on the north side of the Appomattox, when the enemy's trains were attacked by General Gregg, and a sharp fight with the enemy's infantry ensued, in which General Gregg was unfortunately captured.

On arriving at Prince Edward Court House, I found General McKenzie, with his division of cavalry from the Army of the James, and ordered him to cross the bridge on the Buffalo river, and make a reconnoissance to Prospect station, on the Lynchburg railroad, and ascertain if the enemy were moving past that point. Meantime, I heard from General Crook that the enemy had crossed to the north side of the Appomattox, and General Merritt was then moved on and encamped at Buffalo creek, and General Crook was ordered to recross the Appomattox, and encamp at Prospect station. On the morning of the 8th, Merritt and McKenzie continued the march to Prospect station, and Merritt's and Crook's commands then moved on to Appomattox depot, a point on the Lynchburg railroad, five miles south of Appomattox Court House. Shortly after the march commenced, Sergeant White, one of my scouts, notified me that there were four trains of cars at Appomattox depot, loaded with supplies for General Lee's army. Generals Merritt and Crook were at once notified, and the command pushed on briskly for twenty-eight miles. General Custer had the advance,

and on nearing the depot, skilfully threw a force in rear of the trains and captured them. Without halting a moment he pushed on, driving the enemy (who had reached the depot about the same time as our cavalry) in the direction of Appomattox Court House, capturing many prisoners, and twenty-five pieces of artillery, a hospital train, and a large park of wagons. General Deven coming up, went in on the right of Custer. The fighting continued till after dark, and the enemy being driven to Appomattox Court House, I at once notified the Lieutenant-General, and sent word to Generals Ord and Gibbon, of the Army of the James, and General Griffin, commanding the fifth corps, who were in rear, that if they pressed on there was now no means of escape for the enemy, who had reached "the last ditch." During the night, although we knew that the remnant of Lee's army was in our front, we held fast with the cavalry to what we had gained, and ran the captured trains back along the railroad to a point where they would be protected by our infantry that was coming up. The twenty-fourth and fifth corps, and one division of the twenty-fifth corps, arrived about daylight on the 9th at Appomattox depot.

After consulting with General Ord, who was in command of these corps, I rode to the front, near Appomattox Court House, and just as the enemy in heavy force was attacking the cavalry with the intention of breaking through our lines, I directed the cavalry, which was dismounted, to fall back, gradually resisting the enemy, so as to give time for the infantry to form its lines and march to the attack, and when this was done, to move off to the right flank and mount. This was done, and the enemy discontinued his attack as soon as he caught sight of our infantry. I moved briskly around the left of the enemy's line of battle, which was falling back rapidly, (heavily pressed by the advance of the infantry,) and was about



to charge the trains and the confused masses of the enemy, when a white flag was presented to General Custer, who had the advance, and who sent the information to me at once that the enemy desired to surrender.

Riding over to the left at Appomattox Court House, I met Major-General Gordon, of the rebel service, and Major-General Wilcox. General Gordon requested a suspension of hostilities, pending negotiations for a surrender then being held between Lieutenant-General Grant and General Lee. I notified him that I desired to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood, but as there was nothing definitely settled in the correspondence, and as an attack had been made on my lines with the view to escape, under the impression our force was only cavalry, I must have some assurance of an intended surrender. This General Gordon gave by saying that there was no doubt of the surrender of General Lee's army. I then separated from him, with an agreement to meet these officers again in half an hour at Appomattox Court House. At the specified time, in company with General Ord, who commanded the infantry, I again met this officer and also Lieutenant-General Longstreet, and received from them the same assurance, and hostilities ceased until the arrival of Lieutenant-General Grant.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*

*Brevet Major-General JOHN A. RAWLINS, Chief of Staff.*

---

“CAVALRY HEADQUARTERS, }  
 “DINWIDDIE COURT HOUSE, *March 31, 1865.* }  
 “LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT,

“*Commanding Armies United States:*

“The enemy's cavalry attacked me about ten o'clock today, on the road coming in from the west, and a little north of Dinwiddie Court House. This attack was very handsomely repulsed by General Smith's brigade of Crook's

division, and the enemy was driven across Chamberlain's creek. Shortly afterward the enemy's infantry attacked on the same creek in heavy force, and drove in General Davies' brigade, and advancing rapidly, gained the forks of the road at J. Boisseau's. This forced Deven, who was in advance, and Davies, to cross to the Boydton road. General Gregg's brigade, and General Gibbs' brigade, who had been toward Dinwiddie, then attacked the enemy in the rear very handsomely. This stopped the march toward the left of our infantry, and finally caused them to turn toward Dinwiddie, and attack us in heavy force. The enemy then again attacked at Chamberlain's creek, and forced Smith's position. At this time Capehart and Pennington's brigades of Custer's division came up and a very handsome fight occurred.

"The enemy have gained some ground, but we still hold in front of Dinwiddie, and Davies and Deven are coming down the Boydton road to join us.

"The opposing force was Pickett's division, Wise's independent brigade of infantry and Fitzhugh Lee's, Rosser's, and W. H. Lee's cavalry commands.

"The men have behaved splendidly. Our loss in killed and wounded will probably number four hundred and fifty men; very few were lost as prisoners.

"We have of the enemy a number of prisoners.

"This force is too strong for us. I will hold out to Dinwiddie Court House until I am compelled to leave.

"Our fighting to-day was all dismounted.

"P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General.*"

"DABNEY MILLS, }

"March 31, 1865—10.05 P. M. }

"MAJOR GENERAL SHERIDAN :

"The fifth corps has been ordered to your support. Two divisions will go by J. Boisseau's, and one down the Boydton road. In addition to this I have sent McKenzie's cavalry, which will reach you by the Vaughan road.

"All these forces except the cavalry should reach you by twelve o'clock to-night.

"You will assume command of the whole force sent to operate with you, and use it to the best of your ability

to destroy the force which your command has fought so gallantly to-day.

“U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*”

### REBEL FLAGS CAPTURED.

The following are inscriptions on rebel flags captured by General Sheridan's command, near Winchester, Virginia, September 19, 1864, and now deposited in the War Department:

#### REBEL NATIONAL FLAG.

Captured September 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by Andrew J. Lorish, Commissary Sergeant of the first New York dragoons, of the second brigade, first cavalry division.

#### REBEL BATTLE FLAG.

Captured September, 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by Sergeant Henry M. Fox, company M fifth Michigan cavalry, first brigade, first division cavalry.

#### OLD STYLE REBEL NATIONAL FLAG.

Captured September 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by private Gabriel Cole, company I fifth Michigan cavalry, first brigade, first division cavalry.

#### REBEL BATTLE FLAG.

Captured September 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by George E. Meach, farrier company I sixth New York cavalry, second brigade, first cavalry division.

#### VIRGINIA STATE FLAG.

Captured September 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by Patrick McEnroe, private company D sixth New York cavalry, second brigade, first cavalry division.

#### VIRGINIA STATE FLAG.

Captured September 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by George Reynolds, private company M ninth New York cavalry, second brigade, first cavalry division

## REBEL BATTLE FLAG.

Battle flag of second Virginia infantry, Old Stonewall brigade, Early's corps. Thirteen battles inscribed upon it. Captured by the thirty-seventh Massachusetts volunteer infantry, third brigade, first division, sixth army corps, at battle of Winchester, September 19, 1864.

*Captor taken or killed.*

G. L. MONTAGUE, *Lt. Col. Com'g 37th Mass. Vols.*

## REBEL NATIONAL FLAG.

Captured September 19, 1864, near Winchester, Virginia, by color-corporal Charles B. Bowen, company I first New York dragoons, second brigade, first cavalry division.

---

A medal of honor has been conferred upon each of the captors of these rebel colors.

A medal has also been awarded to corporal Isaac Gause, company E second Iowa calvary, for giving important information and acting as a guide, by which means the capture of a rebel regiment was effected, September 13, 1864.

## SUMMARY OF CAVALRY CAPTURES IN THE SHENANDOAH.

"HEADQUARTERS FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION, }  
   "November 16, 1864. }

List of property and prisoners captured by the first cavalry division, from August 16 to November 15, 1864:

Prisoners of war—enlisted men.....	1,690
Prisoners of war—commissioned officers.....	122
Pieces of artillery.....	29
Caissons.....	12
Army wagons.....	36
Ambulances.....	41
Forges.....	2
Mules.....	172
Horses.....	134
Loss of harness.....	263

## CAPTURED AND DESTROYED.

Army wagons C. S. and U. S., loaded with quartermaster's and ordnance stores.....	60
Forges.....	3
Caissons.....	2
Limbers.....	4
Ambulances.....	28
Muskets.....	81
Battle flags captured.....	14

Estimate of property destroyed by first cavalry division during the campaign in the Shenandoah valley :

	NUMBER.	VALUE.
Barns.....	630	\$1,693,000
Flour mills.....	47	314,000
Tons of hay.....	3,345	103,670
Bushels of wheat.....	410,742	1,026,105
Saw mills.....	4	8,000
Furnaces.....	3	450,000
Woolen mill.....	1	10,000
Acres of corn.....	515	18,000
Bushels of oats.....	750	750
Cattle driven off.....	1,347	36,380
Sheep.....	1,281	6,340
Swine.....	725	8,000
Barrels of flour.....	560	6,720
Tons of straw.....	255	2,550
Tons of fodder.....	272	2,720
Tanneries.....	2	4,000
Railroad depot.....	1	3,000
Locomotive engine.....	1	10,000
Box cars.....	7	1,500

Total money value.....\$3,304,735

THEODORE W. BEAN, *Quartermaster and Provost*  
*Marshal First Cavalry Division.*

HEADQUARTERS THIRD DIVISION, CAVALRY CORPS, }  
November 17, 1864. }

Property captured by the third cavalry division, and turned over, and receipts received therefor :

Artillery, pieces.....	51
Caissons.....	30



Battery wagon.....	1
Army wagons.....	44
Spring wagons and ambulances.....	28
Medicine wagon.....	1
Horses.....	426
Mules.....	189
Sets of artillery harness.....	207
Sets of wagon harness.....	197
Heads of beef cattle.....	152

## Property destroyed by the third cavalry division :

	NUMBER.	VALUE.
Flour mills.....	15	\$100,000
Saw mills.....	10	60,000
Barns, containing wheat, etc...	400	600,000
Bushels of wheat.....	200,000	400,000
Bushels of corn.....	300,000	400,000
Bushels of oats.....	90,000	130,000
Cattle driven off.....	500	15,000
Sheep driven off.....	400	8,000
Columbia furnace.....	1	100,000
Caissons.....	3	1,000
Wagons.....	15	15,000
Total.....		\$1,155,000

C. W. LEE, *Captain and Provost Marshal,*  
*Third Cavalry Division, M. M. D.*

## THE SECOND CAVALRY DIVISION.

The following is a list (unofficially) of property captured and destroyed by the second cavalry division since August 1, 1864 :

- Thirteen cannon captured.
- Ten caissons captured.
- One battery forge captured.
- Twenty-five wagons captured.
- Five ambulances captured.
- Seven thousand head of cattle captured.
- Two thousand head of beef cattle captured.
- One thousand set of horse equipments captured.
- Ninety-two sets of artillery harness captured.
- Seventy-five sets of wagon harness captured.
- Ten sets of ambulance harness captured.

Three caissons destroyed.

Forty wagons destroyed.

Five ambulances destroyed.

Seven hundred thousand rounds of ammunition destroyed.

Three thousand stand of small arms destroyed.

In addition to the foregoing, more than two million dollars' worth of property was destroyed, such as grain, forage, mills, tanneries, factories, etc.

In addition, also, to the articles of property enumerated there were taken by the division within the time specified, one thousand five hundred and fifty-five prisoners ; killed of the enemy, one hundred and fifty, and wounded, five hundred, and nine battle flags captured. Also the bridge of the Orange and Alexandria railroad crossing at the Rapidan river.

In regard to the above captures, etc., it may be said that they were made separately, and by direct attacks. That is, they were not taken at the time of the general movements of the army, but at periods when the division moved and attacked the enemy alone.

Referring to the lack of cavalry in the first part of the last attacks on Richmond, the *Army and Navy Journal* says :

There seems to have been lack of cavalry. The divisions we had on either side was well employed, and Gregg had brisk fighting. But the Army of the Potomac has now much less of this arm even than the Army of the Shenandoah. It misses its cavalry very much. Cavalry are the eyes of an army. Cavalry are the antlers of an army, wherewith it may feel its way. In such a country as southwestern Virginia, cavalry is especially needed. Hancock's left was well protected with it, Gregg sweeping about through all the country on that flank, and afterward coming up again to protect the left and rear, when line of battle was formed on the Boydton plank road. This

latter connection was not completed till after mid-day, since there was much scouting and skirmishing to do in the interim. Now, whether it would have been possible for more cavalry to manœuvre on these particular roads, must be considered from this distance, somewhat a matter of conjecture. But we judge that such cavalry would have been useful, and especially in two ways : to scout on the intricate and tortuous roads between the second and fifth corps, and to forewarn us of Mahone's attack on the flank.

---

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### TESTIMONY TO THE VALUE OF AMERICAN CAVALRY.

ONE cannot help noticing the great improvement in the fighting qualities of the cavalry by their last year's practice. Scores of instances were recorded by the *Journal*, in which our cavalry were reported to have been routed by inferior numbers of rebel infantry, in the tangled woods and swamps of Virginia ; and scores of instances occurred, also, in which our infantry routed superior numbers of rebel cavalry. Neither our cavalry nor the rebel could be expected to contend with infantry and artillery. But there is no question that our cavalry grew, at last, to be vastly superior to that of the rebels. When Sheridan took it in hand, it was almost amusing to notice the astonishment with which the cavalrymen found how they were shoved into battle. Grant's instructions to Sheridan at the battle of the Wilderness, are said to have been " to find the enemy and whip him." The words are so characteristic of Grant, and corresponding so nearly to the " instructions" he often gave his officers, and to the " strategy" he employed himself, that, if the story is not true, it is well invented. Sheri-

dan *did* find the enemy, stretching out on our left flank, and though he did not whip him, yet he got his own cavalry into fighting trim, and afterward led it to be of the greatest service. The last movement of Sheridan's cavalry was its greatest. And its march from Winchester to White House, and from White House to Dinwiddie, to turn Lee's right, and its part in the engagements and final pursuit, are worthy of the greatest praise.

These statements, which we find in an able review of Colonel Brackett's "*History of the United States Cavalry*," in the "*Army and Navy Journal*," are all abundantly verified by history; Mexico and the last war fully attest their truth.

The Mounted Rifles were sent to Oregon, under Loring, and, meanwhile, in 1850, Hardee made a campaign against the Camanches and Apaches, in which Steen, Oaks, Grier and others were distinguished. In 1851 and 1852, Colonel Sumner made his march to the canon of Chelly, in New Mexico. Colonel Brackett says that "in the canon of Chelly, Sumner's dragoons did not gather many laurels, though they did their duty; but the Indians were too wily for them, and, lining the sides of the pass, or canon, they rolled down rocks, fired guns, and shot arrows at our troops, until they were glad to retrace their steps. It was, I believe, on this march that the song was composed by a soldier, which nearly all cavalrymen know, and which is sung to the tune of the 'Stable-call.' It runs thus:

"Come off to the stables, all if you are able,  
And give your horses some oats and some corn;  
For if you don't do it the colonel will know it,  
And then you will rue it as sure's you're born."

The following extract is taken from Colonel Brackett's "*History of the United States Cavalry*."

All cavalry in the United States service is light cavalry.

Now the question will be asked what is the distinction between the light and heavy cavalry and the dragoons.

Heavy cavalry in the European armies consists of large men in defensive armor, mounted on heavy, powerful horses. The power of this arm lies in the strength and breeding of the horses, and the courage and activity of the riders. The men wear helmets, and cuirasses, and heavy equipments. The helmet is a piece of defensive armor or covering for the head, worn by nearly all of the cavalry regiments of Europe, and has been found, after ages of use, to be the only proper head-covering for mounted men. Our own big, unwieldy uniform felt hat is nothing more or less than ridiculous, and our forage cap is little better.

The helmets worn by the soldiers of olden times were some of them models of beauty, strength and grace. The helmet of the Romans was a head-piece of iron or brass, which descended behind as far as the shoulders, and left the face uncovered. Upon the top was the crest, in adorning which the soldiers took great pride. The usual adornment was horse-hair, or feathers of divers colors. The helmets of the officers were sometimes very splendid, being adorned with gold and silver. A *dragon* was used as the crest of the helmet by the mounted soldiers in the middle ages, hence the name dragoon.

The cuirass is another piece of defensive armor, made of plate well hammered, serving to cover the body from the neck to the waist both before and behind, called breast and back plate. The cuirassiers of the armies of Europe wear the cuirass. The helmets worn by the Russian soldiers are both serviceable and beautiful.

The heavy cavalry, then, consists of heavy men and heavy horses, who are used upon occasion to hurl down upon the enemy, and by their weight alone overpower them. It is questionable whether they are of much ser-



vice, and no doubt we are as well off without them. They are incapable of doing the same duty that is required of the light cavalry, as even short marches break down both men and horses. They are more formidable in appearance than in reality.

Dragoons are next to be considered. They were originally organized to act either as cavalry or infantry skirmishers—a sort of hybrid corps to do duty on foot or on horseback; now they are simply a body of regular cavalry soldiers, in some countries divided into heavy and light dragoons.

All of the cavalry which has been organized in the United States is properly designated as light cavalry. The laws of Congress made two regiments of dragoons, one of mounted riflemen, and two of cavalry. It was no doubt intended to make the dragoons and cavalry all one arm, but a fault in the law, which was subsequently remedied, made it otherwise, and Jefferson Davis, who was Secretary of War, took advantage of it, and made two arms, thereby securing promotion for his favorites in the cavalry arm without reference to the dragoons. Army men will readily understand this distinction.

During the Mexican war the dragoons were armed with musketoons, which were carried on sling-belts, except when marching, dragoon sabres of the Prussian pattern, and horse-pistols. This was unchanged for several years afterward. The Mounted Rifles were armed with percussion rifles and Colt's army revolvers—no sabres. The revolvers were supplied to all cavalrymen as soon as was convenient. The cavalry regiments were armed with sabres, rifle carbines, and Colt's navy revolvers. Why they were not armed with army revolvers no person could ever give a good reason. The sabre in Indian fighting is simply a nuisance; they jingle abominably, and are of no earthly use. If a soldier gets close enough to an Indian

to use a sabre, it is about an even thing as to which goes under first.

The trimming of the dragoon jackets after the close of the Mexican war was orange, and that of the Rifles green. The cavalry had, and still have, yellow. The dragoons and Rifles exulted in what was known as the "Albert hat," with orange and green pompons. The cavalry got—God knows where—the "cavalry hat" familiar to theatre goers as that worn by Fra Diavolo. If the whole earth had been ransacked, it is difficult to tell where a more ungainly piece of furniture could have been found. It is now used by the whole army, being somewhat more unwieldy than the original pattern. It seems to me that soldiers take delight in seeing into what ludicrous shapes they can get these hats, with a tassel hanging in front, on one side, or behind, and a black ostrich feather, which, after one or two wettings, has a most bedraggled and wilted appearance. The forage cap is a poor imitation of the French *kepis*, and seems with us to run mostly to visor. The old fashioned dragoon cap was both graceful and soldierly.

The saddle used in the cavalry now is that known as the McClellan saddle, which was patented after his visit to Europe by General McClellan. The soldiers like it, as it is easy to ride on, and does not give a horse a sore back unless carelessly used. Men who ride saddles are generally the best judges of them, though heads of department sometimes think differently. It is fair, then, to say that the saddle, if it had a breast-strap, is a good one, as it has the verdict of the *men* in its favor. I do not like the bridle so well. The bit is ordinarily too powerful for the horse; it is made of poor steel, and the curb-chain is apt to straighten out upon pulling the reins. This could, no doubt, be remedied. I think, however, a decided improvement could be made in the choice of bits.

The swiftest horses are not always the best in cavalry. If all were equally fast, it would be very well, but, in making a charge upon any given point, a few horses will always come out ahead, and leave their companions far in the rear. Officers who insist upon their men preserving their lines in a charge, insist upon an impossibility.

Another subject has impressed itself strongly upon my mind, which is the fact that, in our regular service, the horses are *groomed too much*. I cannot say that this applies to volunteers. In my own experience, the fault with them lies the other way. What I mean is this, that in winter time, when the weather is cold, and the horses, as is almost always the case with us, are without suitable shelter, the grooming the horse one hour at daybreak, and one hour just before sunset, is absolutely hurtful. Some cavalry officers, who have been taught certain rules, insist upon the men keeping at work steadily *one hour* on each horse, without any regard to time, place, circumstances, or any thing else. Now, in the fine stables which the military of France and Great Britain have, it may do well to keep the horses looking sleek-coated, giving them each day gentle exercise; but with us, who have our poor animals trembling the great part of the winter from sheer cold, it is worse than nonsense to tear up their hides each day by means of the curry-comb and brush. The pores are left open, the skin is scratched, and the wretched animal stands crouched up all night, suffering from the effects of this well-meant, but this ill-administered grooming. The condition of our poor horses sometimes in winter is such as to make any heart susceptible of pity feel the most profound sorrow. But this I do not find fault with; in actual campaign both men and horses must suffer, but do not let us cavalry people make our only friends—our horses—suffer unnecessarily. British and French officers may think this singular advice, but they must recollect

that their cavalry force is small compared with ours, and they have every convenience to make themselves and their horses comfortable—good stables, plenty of forage, and nice roads to travel upon.

About marching, too, a few hints may not be amiss. In starting out after feeding, let the horses walk about one hour, when a halt of fifteen minutes ought to be sounded. Let the men close up, and then dismount. This eases the horse, gives him a chance to breathe a short time, and makes him feel better. When ready to start, tighten up the girths, which will be found to have slackened up, one or two holes. Do not let the saddle be loose on the back; it should sit snug; but, at the same time, caution all soldiers not to draw too tightly, as I have seen some dreadful sores made on horses' sides by the ring and strap which is used on the McClellan saddle, and which is borrowed from the Mexicans.

About riding, I have to say that soldiers must learn to ride themselves, and *time alone will make good riders*. Some men never do know how to ride, and never learn. The sooner they are got rid of the better. Great, beefy creatures some of them are, who have no more elasticity than a dead animal, and who worry and fret their poor horses almost to madness. Our men are generally (I mean the Americans) natural riders, and soon become good horsemen. They quickly learn how to take care of horses. This is particularly the case where the men become attached to their animals, and make pets of them. I have known many a soldier to sit up half the night in order to get a chance to *steal* a feed for his horse. This venial offence is forgiven generally by the officers. The quartermasters are the sufferers, but they always manage some way to keep even.

As to riders, the United States cavalry, under the old system, had few superiors. The English, as a general

thing, are most wretched riders, and it is no wonder that they are almost universally whipped whenever they go into battle. The "bumping" up and down on their saddles is not only excruciating to themselves, but ruinous to their unfortunate animals. Nolan, in his work on cavalry, speaks in the most disparaging terms of the English cavalry, as does Lieutenant-General Sir Charles James Napier: and no doubt justly so, as it is hard to imagine a more helpless body of men than they are. Poor Nolan himself lost his life while charging at Balaklava, where the English horse was entirely cut to pieces by the Russians.

After a hard day's march, or, indeed, any march in hot weather, upon halting, the saddle should be removed, the saddle-blanket turned and left on the horse, strapped on by the surcingle. This will prevent saddle-boils. After the saddle is removed, nearly every horse wishes to roll. He should be allowed to do so, the man keeping hold of the halter-strap or lariat while he is rolling. Ordinary marches for cavalry should not exceed eighteen miles per day. The horses should be watered once or twice on the march, if it is convenient, and should be allowed to drink as much water as they want, provided they are moved on after drinking, but on no account should they, after marching some distance, be allowed to drink and cool. If this is permitted, nine cases out of ten the animals will be foundered. Officers should be continually on their guard watching recruits in this respect, as by its neglect many a fine animal has been ruined. In cold weather care should be taken to see that the horses are well blanketed during the night, and, if necessary, men should be detailed to keep the blankets on, as horses are apt to rub or kick them off. No man can be a good cavalry officer unless he is continually on the alert, looking out for the welfare of his horses.



Cavalry soldiers generally do well enough for themselves, but cavalry horses must be looked after.

A march of a thousand miles is a better school for a recruit than all of the riding-halls ever built, and United States soldiers are *often* sent across the continent of North America merely as a part of a summer campaign.

Horses, shoes should be inspected frequently, as, in spite of every care, shoes are sometimes left on too long, and sometimes they are knocked off, and the horse, on a rocky road, becomes lame at once. The Indians never shoe their horses; the hoofs of their animals become as hard nearly as flint. They go over the rockiest roads with our cavalry chasing them, and as soon as the shoes of our horses are torn off by the rocks they become disabled, and the Indians laugh at our efforts to overtake them.

The shoeing tools of the farrier should consist of a shoeing knife, a toe knife, a shoeing hammer, a clinching iron, a clinch-cutter, a pair of pincers, and a rasp. What is known as a buttress should never be used, nor ought a shoe to be put on while hot, any more than is sufficient to show that it is of the right shape. When starting on a march each horse ought to have two shoes at least fitted, so that the farrier will have nothing to do but nail them on in case any are lost while travelling. Altogether too little attention is paid to shoeing by cavalry officers. Whatever relates to the care and training of his horses is a part of his profession, and the smallest matter ought not to be neglected.

A good *rider* will always make a good *raider*.

As to the equipment, there is no doubt but there is now too much weight on the waist-belt. The sabre hangs on it, also the cartridge box, with twenty or forty rounds in it, and the revolver. This is altogether too much, and breaks many a man down, causing disease of various kinds, which are ruinous to cavalrymen. Some system of

shoulder-belts ought to be devised to lighten up the strain which now bears with so much weight and such ill effects upon a particular part of the body.

Our sabres are never really sharp, and good officers think there is no way of keeping them so as long as we continue to use the steel scabbard. But the question is, what are we going to get to replace it with? Nolan says the sabres used by the East India native cavalry are condemned English sword-blades, sharpened to the keenest edge, and kept in wooden scabbards. They are never drawn except in action, where, according to his account, they do dreadful execution.

Our revolvers, of Colt's pattern, cannot at present be much improved upon.

Sharp's carbines are the favorite cavalry carbines, though upon this subject there is a diversity of opinion, each commander having some pet arm which he thinks superior to any other. Our cavalrymen ought to have good carbines, as our general officers employ them in every conceivable way; and it is really surprising how much, and how many different kinds of work they are called upon to perform. Some of our sapient political brigadier-generals can use up a cavalry regiment with a rapidity truly astonishing, and their ignorance is only exceeded by their conceit. In our rebellion, in many instances, the less a man knew about military matters, the better officer he was supposed to be.

Within the last eighteen months there has been a decided improvement in the carbines and accoutrements which have been issued to the cavalry. It is now conceded that the Spencer carbine, or rifle, is by all odds the best shooting weapon ever issued to mounted men; and the cartridge-box invented by Colonel Erastus Blakeslee, late of the first regiment of Connecticut cavalry, leaves but little to be desired. This cartridge-box is carried by

a belt over the right shoulder, thus relieving the strain on the abdomen. With it seven cartridges are loaded as quickly as one by the ordinary method, and it is more easily carried than any box in use.

---

The world-wide fame of our American cavalry, as a distinctive body, commences almost, as has been said, with the present war; and by brilliant names the service is illuminated. At the head of the list, in our opinion, stand the memorable names of John Buford and Philip H. Sheridan. They are *par excellence* the American cavalry leaders. John Buford, alas, died before his name could ring through the world, or even through the country, as it did among his friends and among the students of the art of war. He died on the 16th day of December, 1863, before the great final campaign had begun. His granite monument at West Point records the simple story of the affection of the officers and men of his command, by whom it was erected. He was the best of cavalry officers while he lived, and the most promising when he died. He was the personification of bravery, coolness, skill, prescience in battle, and overflowing kindness to his men. Of these qualities a thousand instances could be related. His successor in command of the cavalry of the army of the Potomac, the renowned "Phil Sheridan," achieved greater distinction with that body, and far wider reputation, by means of a more vigorous leadership in the army in general, and by a personal dash and determination worthy of the highest praise.

Sheridan did not so much add new principles or new education to the cavalry force. He did not arrange it in any peculiar and brilliant style of organization and discipline. As an organizer and disciplinarian, indeed, he would not claim to be distinguished; but he fought it through thick and thin. He fought it as it had never

before been fought. He knew no such word as failure. He was "irrepressible." If repulsed, he quickly went at it again. In a single word, he fought this army as Grant did the whole tremendous army of the Potomac, with the irresistible force of a Suwarrow. His victories in the valley of the Shenandoah were those which first entitled him to general applause, though he had made daring raids previously, and of course had had a record fine enough to gain his appointment to high command. At Cedar creek he "plucked up drowning honor by the locks." Reviewing that occurrence, the *Journal* declared he could claim to be the Desaix of the war. Desaix, who on the noon of Marengo, glancing at his watch, said, "It is a battle lost, but it is not too late to win another"—was equalled by Sheridan, riding with foaming horse from Winchester to Middletown, in season to save the day. And the London *Times* of August 16th, in decrying what is called Sheridan's "irrepressible rhodomontade" on the Mexican "campaign, in air projected by his very hot and vigorous Irish brain," yet added: "We must speak of the man, militarily, with great respect. He was the Desaix of the civil war, one of the few generals in history who, joining an army defeated, re-won the lost battle on the spot, by leading beaten troops to a victorious charge." Sheridan, indeed, added to the cavalry the very element it wanted, that of "dash," combined with a bull-dog stubbornness. His achievements in turning the right flank of Lee at Five Forks, and in the subsequent pursuit, culminated his reputation as the first of American cavalymen in the field.

*Apropos* to American cavalry achievements, a late number of the *Army and Navy Journal* adds:

"We have seen with great pleasure a series of sketches illustrating the final march of Sheridan's cavalry of the army of the Potomac from Winchester to White House,

and from White House via Dinwiddie to Appomattox Court House. In this grand movement, which began with badly breaking one of Lee's lines of communication with the rear, and ended in turning his right flank, after the gallant action at Five Forks, the cavalry bore a conspicuous part. The sketches were made upon the spot, and are of unusual taste and perfect accuracy. They embrace many views of the cavalry on the march at different points; of Lee's treaty, camp, and surrender; of prominent officers of both armies, etc. The artist is Major J. Spreadburg, who served as assistant adjutant-general in the cavalry corps, and as A. I. G. cavalry, M. M. division. We should like to see these sketches published, with a running and official commentary on the scenes they set forth."

### OFFICIAL REPORT.

"HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY CORPS, }  
"NOTTOWAY COURT HOUSE, VA., *April 29, 1865.* }  
"LIEUTENANT-COLONEL F. C. NEWHALL, *Assistant Adjutant-General, Headquarters Cavalry Corps:*

"COLONEL:—I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of my command while serving under Major-General Sheridan:

"On the morning of April 1st, the first division, fifth army corps, which was then holding a position on the White Oak road, near the Dabney house, was ordered by Major-General Warren to move at 5 A. M., in the direction of Dinwiddie Court House, and report to Major-General Sheridan. After moving something over three miles, the cavalry division under General Deven was met, when the first division was halted, and its presence soon after reported to the major general commanding. Major-General Warren arrived between 9 and 10 A. M., and the troops remained massed at this point until about two o'clock, P. M., when they were moved to within about a mile of Five Forks, where the corps was placed in line of battle; the first division being on the right flank formed in three lines, with one brigade on its right in



echelon, the third division, Brevet Major-General Crawford, in the centre, and the second division, Brevet Major-General Ayres, on the left.

"Immediately after the order to advance against the enemy was given, (who was supposed to be intrenched at Five Forks,) with instructions to the division, that after it had crossed the road it was to change direction to the left, so as to strike the enemy in flank or rear. After advancing about a mile, and finding nothing in front, save a few cavalry videttes, and there being heavy volleys of musketry to the left and rear, the division was halted, and upon a personal examination, it was found that the enemy was moving up the White Oak road. Immediately the division was faced by the left flank, and marched some four or five hundred yards, when its direction as to the line of battle was changed perpendicularly to the left, and moved down at a double-quick upon the enemy, who was visible some three-quarters of a mile distant, moving up the White Oak road. The enemy's rifle-pits were taken, together with about (see note) fifteen hundred prisoners and several flags. Here a little confusion resulted from the troops exchanging shots with the cavalry, who were coming up in front of the enemy's works. After a few minutes' delay, the line of battle was again changed perpendicularly to the White Oak road and the enemy's works. This change brought the first division on the left of the third. The command was then pushed forward along the rifle-pits, capturing prisoners, and driving the enemy before it, until they advanced to the Five Forks, where the cavalry and infantry met, capturing five guns, several caissons, and the third brigade, first division, taking on the Fork road a train of wagons and ambulances belonging to Pickett's division. About this point Major-General Sheridan in person directed me to take command of the fifth corps, and push the enemy down the White Oak road. I immediately directed General Ayres and the other commanders to push forward with all possible despatch, and the pursuit was kept up until after dark, when the command was halted, the cavalry having pushed to the front, out of sight and hearing of the infantry. Soon after this an order was received from the major-general commanding, to withdraw the corps some three miles, and

camp near Gravelly Run church. The corps went in bivouac about 11 P. M.

"On the morning of April 2d, the command moved down the White Oak road some two miles, and massed near the Dabney house, where it remained until about 11 A. M., when it returned to the Five Forks, and moved across Hatcher's run, on the Ford road, and across the Southside railroad to the Coxe road, driving the enemy's cavalry (Fitz Hugh Lee's division) before it, and camping at night at the Williamson house, at the intersection of the Namozine road with the River road. The third division under General Crawford, was detached at this point, and directed to co-operate with General Merritt, who was confronting the enemy near the Namozine river.

"April 3d.—The command moved along the River road to the Namozine creek, thence across to the ford taken by the cavalry, bivouacking for the night in the vicinity of Deep creek.

"April 4th.—The command moved at five o'clock, A. M., via Dennisville, and before dark was found in line of battle below Jetersville, with its left extending across the Danville railroad. During the night a line of rifle-pits was constructed in front of the corps. The command remained in this position during the whole of the 5th inst.

"At 7.40 P. M., April 5th, an order was received from the major-general commanding directing me to report for orders to Major-General Meade, commanding the army of the Potomac.

"On the morning of the 2d, at the Five Forks, between three and four thousand stand of arms and several caissons and wagons were destroyed, there being no transportation for them.

"I desire to call to the especial attention of the major-general commanding, Brevet Major-Generals Ayres and Bartlett, Brigadier-General Chamberlain, and Brevet Brigadier-General Gregory, for their efficiency and promptness in executing my orders, and in the management of their commands in the battle of the 1st inst.; also Lieutenant-Colonel Richardson, commanding seventh Wisconsin veteran volunteers, who came under my personal observation—he handled his regiment with great ability, and displayed great energy in pushing his command after the enemy.

"The number of prisoners captured from the enemy

and received by the provost-marshal of the corps on the 1st inst., was three thousand two hundred and forty-four, including one hundred and thirty-two officers. The number picked up on the subsequent days was nine hundred and forty-four, including forty-two officers.

"A report of flags captured and the names of the captors, has already been forwarded with the flags, to the headquarters of the cavalry corps.

"I submit herewith a list—numerical and tabular—of the casualties in my command in the battle of the 1st inst.

"I am, colonel, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"CHAS. GRIFFIN, *Brevet Major-General.*"

"NOTE.—The official report from the commanding officer first division, states the number of prisoners taken by the division on the 1st inst., to be as follows :

"First brigade, one thousand and fifty men, two colonels, six captains, and eleven lieutenants ; second brigade, four hundred and seventy-five men ; third brigade, eight hundred and forty-nine men, three captains, and five lieutenants. Total, twenty-seven officers and two thousand three hundred and seventy-four men.

"There were three brass guns (light twelve-pounders) abandoned by the enemy upon the Namozine road, and hauled in and turned over by my direction. These guns have not been mentioned in the body of this report.

"In compliance with orders from Major-General Sheridan, received April 5th, at 7.40 P. M., I reported to Major-General Meade, with the fifth corps, at Jetersville, for orders. At 6 A. M., on the 6th inst., in compliance with orders from headquarters army of the Potomac, the fifth corps moved from Jetersville, along the Danville railroad, in the direction of Amelia Court House, to attack the enemy, the second division, under General Ayres, taking the advance, the sixth corps connecting on the right, and the second corps on the left. After moving about three miles, to a place called "Smith's shop," undoubted evidence was received that the enemy had left our front, and had gone westward. The command was halted, and this information sent to the major-general commanding, when orders were received to move to the north on the Pridersville road, thence to move on the right of the army. The advance was continued, via

Painesville, to the vicinity of Ligenstone ferry, meeting with no opposing forces save small detachments of cavalry, and capturing about three hundred prisoners and many wagons. The distance marched this day was thirty-two miles.

"April 7th, moved at 5 A. M., in obedience to instructions, for Farmville, via Rice's store; the head of the column arriving near High bridge, orders were received at 9.30 A. M. to pass in rear of the second and sixth corps, and move with all possible despatch to Prince Edward's Court House, which point was reached about 7.30 P. M., marching about twenty miles.

"April 8th the corps marched toward the Lynchburg railroad, in obedience to the following order:

" 'HEADQUARTERS ARMIES UNITED STATES, }  
   " 'FARMVILLE, April, 7, 1865. }"

" 'GENERAL MEADE:

" 'Order the fifth corps to follow the twenty-fourth, at 6 A. M., up the Lynchburg road; the second and sixth to follow the enemy north of the river.

" 'U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General*.

" 'Official—E. S. PARKER, *Lieut.-Colonel, and A. A. A. G.*'

"Striking in at 'Prospect Station,' about 12 M., thence following the twenty-fourth corps toward Appomattox Court House, bivouacking the next morning about 2 A. M. within about two miles of the above place, having marched a distance of twenty-nine miles. The march from Prospect Station was very slow and tedious, the road being obstructed by the repeated and long halts of the twenty-fourth corps.

"April 9th—The corps moved at 4 A. M., reaching General Sheridan's headquarters near Appomattox Court House about 6 A. M., very soon after it was reported that the cavalry were heavily engaged and hard pressed. The twenty-fourth corps was moving out, when the second division under General Ayres moved on a parallel line rapidly toward the firing. A message was received from General Sheridan through his aide, Captain Martin, that the enemy was pressing back the cavalry. General Ayres immediately pushed forward his division at double quick, and deployed the one hundred and ninetieth and one hundred and ninety-first Pennsylvania volunteers, under



Colonel Pattee, as skirmishers, (they being armed with the Spencer rifle,) and the rest of the division in two lines of battle. The first division under General Bartlett, came up on the right and formed two lines of battle, with the one hundred and fifty-fifth Pennsylvania, a portion of the one hundred and ninety-eighth Pennsylvania, and the one hundred and eighty-fifth New York Volunteers, as a skirmish line. All immediately moved forward and attacked the enemy, pushing him back, and driving both the infantry and artillery from the hills, westward through the town, taking a number of prisoners, several wagons, caissons and limbers. A portion of the skirmish line had entered the town, being strongly supported by our lines of battle, when a message was received from General Sheridan that hostilities would be suspended, as General Lee was about to surrender.

"Although a battle was expected at this point, and orders had been carefully given by staff officers for the divisions to keep well closed up, through some unaccountable mistake or neglect on the part of the commander of the third division, it failed to follow the column, and did not move until an officer had been specially despatched for it to move up, and did not reach its proper position until after hostilities for the day had ceased.

"In conclusion, to show more concisely the part taken in the short campaign by the corps, I would state that our killed and wounded amount to, officers, eighteen killed, one hundred and three wounded; enlisted men, two hundred and forty-five killed, one thousand five hundred and fifty-three wounded—missing, five hundred and forty-six. Total, two thousand four hundred and sixty-five. The number of prisoners captured was one hundred and eighty-seven officers, four thousand two hundred and eighty-seven men; total, four thousand four hundred and seventy-four.

"Too much praise cannot be given both officers and men for the cheerfulness exhibited through the long marches, and the many privations and hardships that had to be endured.

"I beg to call the especial attention of the major-general commanding to Brevet Major-Generals Ayres and Bartlett, and Brigadier-General Chamberlain, for their



promptness, efficiency and zealousness in the execution of all orders.

"To my staff, both personal and corps, my thanks are due for their patience, alacrity and cheerfulness in the discharge of all their duties.

"A list of casualties, numerical and tabular, has already been forwarded.

"I am, Colonel, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"CHARLES GRIFFIN,

*"Brevet Major-General Commanding."*



## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCLUSION.

In the summer of 1865 General Sheridan was placed in command of the important department in Texas, bordering on the lines of Mexico, with his headquarters in the city of New Orleans.

The position of the army of General Sheridan during the summer of 1865 is described by a correspondent writing from Brownsville, Texas, as follows :

The "Army of Observation," ordered to the Rio Grande, has reached its destination, and dispositions have been made for its present occupancy of the frontier, extending from a point a few miles above this place to the island of Brazos. Santiago. The latter is for the present the base of supplies, and is occupied by the third division (recently organized) of the twenty-fifth corps, Brevet Brigadier-General A. G. Draper commanding. The first division, under Brevet Major-General Giles A. Smith, is stationed here. The second, commanded by Brevet Brigadier-General Jackson, is at White Ranch, between this point and Brazos.

Several changes took place in the army of observation during the year. At the time alluded to the chief interest clustered around Matamoras. This city is situated upon the opposite side of the river from Brownsville, was the great depot for cotton upon its arrival within the domain of Maximilian; and its prosperity was increased to an almost fabulous extent thereby. But in poor distracted Mexico, the prosperity of its people is not the prosperity of the State. While the Mexican is inherently patriotic, and loves his country, the constant state of insecurity in which he lives makes him indifferent to every thing but his own immediate success, and the citizen takes no interest in extending and beautifying his city; and the agriculturist is content with raising the little necessary for the immediate sustenance of himself and family, and cares not to improve his land, from which at any moment he may be driven forth. As the natural result of this, Mexican cities are low, mean and dirty, in appearance and in fact; and the greater portion of the farm lands are covered with the rank vegetation of the chaparral and the prairie. Previous to the close of the war large amounts of goods of every description were brought to this city in anticipation of its continuance, and in consequence, upon the arrival of our troops, the market on the American side being closed, the supply far exceeded the demand, and goods fell below the wholesale prices in New York. The presence of a large body of troops in the vicinity has again increased these prices to the old standard, though more in consequence of the anticipated market than of present sales.

The city is occupied at present by about three thousand imperialist troops, some three hundred of whom are Austrians and the remainder natives. Though thus protected, Matamoras is virtually besieged by three or four hundred liberals, said to be commanded by Cortinas.

Subsequent to the surrender of Kirby Smith, the rebels at this point sold to the imperialists across the river a battery of six pieces (which had been in use at this point) for seventeen thousand dollars. This fact becoming known, their return was demanded by General Steele, commanding the troops on the Rio Grande. The question was referred to Maximilian, who directed the demand to be complied with, and the guns were brought over and parked upon the parade ground near the site of Fort Brown at the southern side of Matamoras.

Reports of the unsettled condition of affairs on the frontier were not believed at the headquarters of the empire, and Senor Portella, one of Maximilian's officials, was recently sent to Matamoras to examine and report thereon. It is stated, on excellent authority, that in his report he declared matters even worse than had been represented, and it is anticipated that, as the result of his report, a large force will be sent to the frontier.

The secret police in the various cities of the empire are excessively active and vigilant, and any person reporting news unfavorable to the imperialists runs a great risk of being arrested, and all parties are extremely reticent on this account. Merchants and other business men in Matamoras, receiving letters from their correspondents and agents in the interior, state that little or nothing is said in them in reference to political matters, for fear of annoyance on the part of the government.

We cannot make a more fitting close to these authentic records of Sheridan, than by inserting the following Poem, by George H. Boker, Esq., who has rendered such efficient service to the country by his gifted lyre, and by his labors as secretary of that eminently patriotic association, the "Philadelphia Union League":

## CAVALRY SHERIDAN.

BY GEORGE H. BOKER.

## I.

Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan!

Him of the horses and sabres I sing.

Look, how he drove them!

Look, how he clove them!

Sabred, belabored, confused and confounded

The whole rebel rout, as they fell back astounded

At the fierce stride and swing

Of our men galloping,

Shouting with vengeance, roaring with laughter,

Cheering with victory, as they plunged after

Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan!

## II.

Ah, fair Shenandoah, thou nest of the robber,

How stands the count with thy people to-day?

Where is the fire now,

Showing thy ire now,

Blazing, while gazing with fear and amazement,

As on it crept swiftly from door-post to casement,

Weeping with pale dismay,

Stood maids and matrons gray?

Has it not spread to thy end of the valley?

Did it not follow thee in thy grand sally,

Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan?

## III.

Chambersburg, Chambersburg, smouldering Chambers-  
burg!

Sit in thy ruins, content with thy lot!

Lo, thy despoiler,

Snared by the toiler,

Retreated defeated—torn, pierced, slashed with gashes—

And what thy homes were now their bodies are—ashes!

O, be thy griefs forgot;

Every bright-laurelled spot

On thy fair hill-sides wait matron and maiden

With chaplets of glory, to welcome and laden

Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan!

## IV.

O, Early, mad Early! thou ruthless invader,

Where are the troopers who followed thy raid?

Look at their corses!

Soldiers and horses

Whiten and brighten with bones, shining grimly,

On all the wide plains they rode over so trimly.

What has the raven said?

Where has the red fox preyed?

What is the high-sailing buzzard declaring

In Richmond's white upturned face of thy warfaring,

Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan?

## V.

Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan,

When thou shalt come to thy people again,



Crowns we shall twine for thee ;  
And the ripe wine for thee,  
Flashing and splashing from goblet and breaker,  
Shall whirl round the lips of the eloquent speaker,  
As he essays in vain  
Homage to make it plain  
How the great heart of the jubilant nation  
Swells toward thy own in its full admiration,  
Sheridan, Sheridan, Cavalry Sheridan !

THE END.





## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

This book is due on the date indicated below, or at the expiration of a definite period after the date of borrowing, as provided by the rules of the Library or by special arrangement with the Librarian in charge.

[illegible]

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



0315022366

92Sh51

Denison

Philip H. Sheridan

D

92Sh51

D

MAY 13 1933



